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THE NEW REPUBLIC

September 20, 1980 Price $1.25

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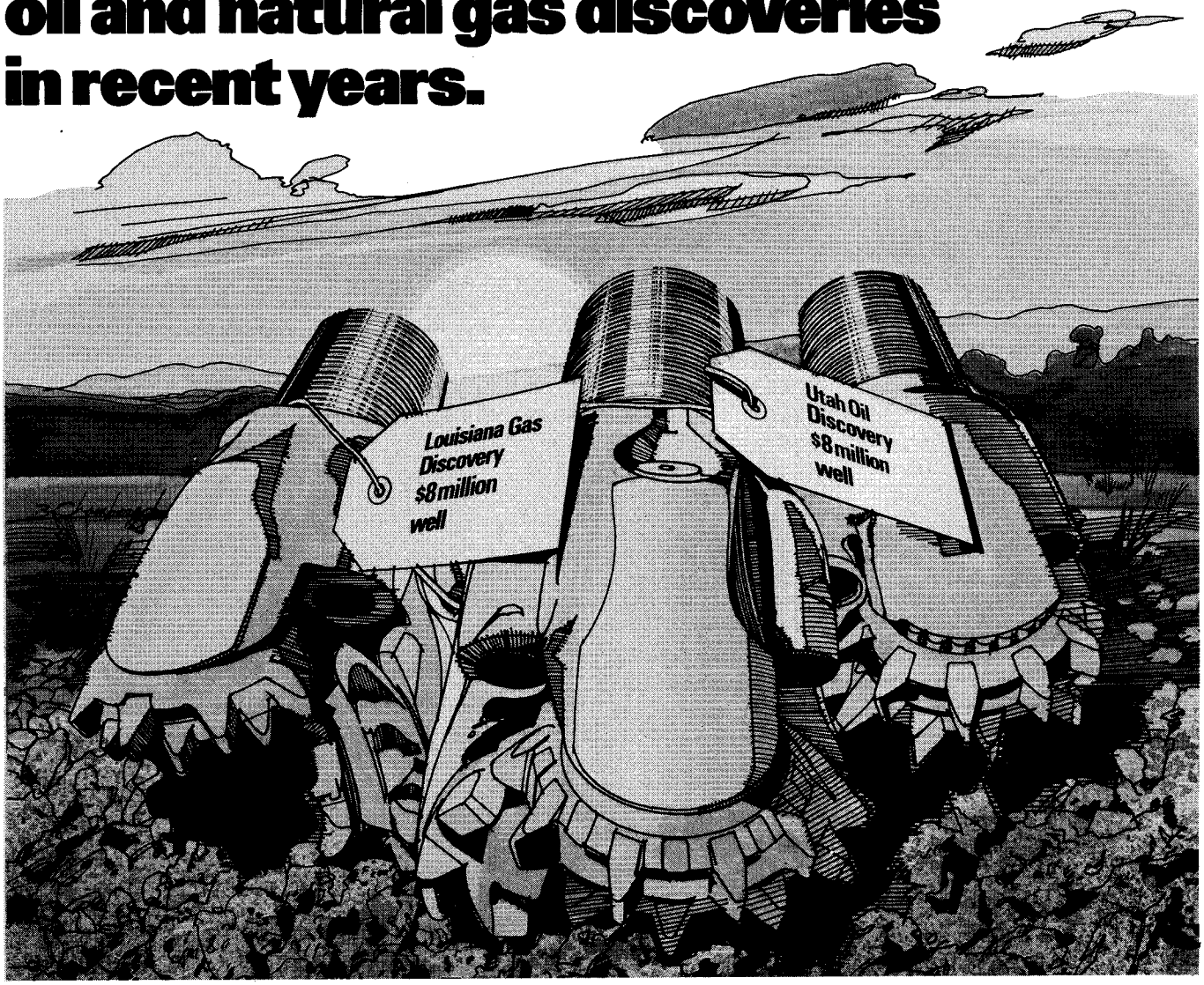

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TRB

from Washington
September 20, 1980

Handsome Strangers

After getting off to the worst start of any presidential nominee since George McGovern named, and then withdrew, Thomas Eagleton as his running mate in 1972, Ronald Reagan may have gotten his confused campaign finally on the tracks. Last week he raised the most important domestic issue of 1980, the economy, and the one on which Jimmy Carter is weakest. (The most important foreign issue is America's relationship to Russia in the nuclear cold war and Ronald Reagan's trigger finger.)

When Democrats started their nominating convention in New York last month, Reagan led in the polls by 15 or 20 percent and seemed unbeatable. But after a series of Reagan ad lib gaffes, a nationwide *Time* magazine-Yankelovich poll now shows Carter and Reagan neck and neck, with nobody very enthusiastic about either. The two front-runners have 39 percent each, and John Anderson has 15 percent by this count.

This column has a stake in Reagan and has been suffering a feeling of abuse and let-down by his awful beginning. We have thought (and written) for about a year that he had the advantage if he got nominated and would probably win; the business cycle hasn't been so lethal for an incumbent since Hoover in 1932. If Republicans can't capture the White House with double-digit inflation, with unemployment edging 8.5 percent, and with a thumping deficit, they might as well go out of business as a party. The odds certainly should be on their side.

Four years ago Jimmy Carter started off with a series of gaffes, too. His original lead over President Ford of 33 points evaporated. He won by a hair, 51 percent to 48 percent, with only 54 percent of those eligible voting. He was another Washington outsider telling how he was going to change Washington when he took over: he would cut federal agencies to "no more than 200"; he would end inflation and unemployment; and reduce the defense budget by five to seven billion dollars. His difficulty was not with ad libs but with what he set down deliberately. I remember getting a copy of *Playboy* on the Carter whistle-stop special train and reading the embarrassing interview with the candidate about lust.

Americans like to elect a president first and find out about him afterward. They know that something is wrong with their government and hope that somehow some handsome stranger will make the thing work. I figure that it takes an outsider a couple of years to get used to the power centers of Washington. Reagan will have to do it, too, but he might do it quicker than Carter. I suspect he would turn the job over to his subordinates, as Harding did. Harding was the most superficial president we ever had, I suppose, yet his cabinet included luminaries like Charles Evans Hughes, Andrew Mellon, and Herbert Hoover. He would have made out except for the crooks.

Now it looks as though the Reagan forces have gotten the situation in hand and may finally have put Carter on the defensive. They have found that running for election is different from running for the nomination (as both are different from running the country). The small Liberal party in New York will endorse John Anderson and put him on their ballot, which may throw the state's pivotal 41 electoral votes to Reagan; the League of Women Voters has put Carter on the spot by inviting Anderson to join the debates; the people handling Reagan have arranged a system of containment—they assigned the widely known political consultant Stuart Spencer to fly with the candidate to Los Angeles to jog his elbow whenever the look comes into his eyes indicating that he is about to make an impulsive off-the-cuff remark. (It is not likely to be an easy task and obviously requires somebody who is in Reagan's peer group and can speak briskly and tellingly.) Finally Reagan forces launched the key attack of the campaign on Carter's handling of the economy and for almost the first time the nation had a substantive issue to debate. It will be interesting to see whether the mass media can handle it, and whether Reagan can present a reasonable and persuasive case.

He has come out formally for the Kemp-Roth tax reduction program which has been debated in Washington for several years. It is a proposal to meet the recession by stimulating the economy. "This plan calls for an across-the-board three-year reduction in personal income tax rates: 10 percent in 1981, 10 percent in 1982, and 10 percent in 1983," he told the International Business Council in Chicago. "My goal is to implement three reductions in a systematic, planned manner." There were five parts altogether in Reagan's long-awaited economic speech, and he delivered it without quips or gaffes.

When the Kemp-Roth program was first offered by Republican fiscal radicals, it proposed tax cuts alone, without compensating reductions in federal spending. It was a pie-in-the-sky program quickly attacked by many economists. Sponsors originally argued that it would be such a shot in the arm that it would pay for itself in a short time. Weighty pro-Republican pundit Arthur F. Burns said last March, "One listens with a sense of dismay to those candidates for president who promise to cure inflation by massive cuts in taxes." Both former president Ford and his top economic adviser Herbert Stein announced opposition to Kemp-Roth. But now it has been cleaned up, and amalgamated with other proposals in a Reagan package. Nearly everybody agrees that the nation needs tax relief. Automatic payroll tax increases for Social Security, higher gasoline taxes, windfall profits taxes on oil, and the so-called bracket creep of the income tax under inflation indicate that new federal revenues will outstrip new spending by more than $75 billion between fiscal 1979 and fiscal 1981. In blunt terms, it means that in a time of recession we are increasing federal taxes, a crazy way to handle the business cycle. Tax rates are as high as they were at the peak of World War II.

The question is, who should get the benefit of the indicated tax abatement? Here is the basis for rousing liberal-conservative argument. Liberal Walter Heller wants tax cuts used as incentives to spur America's lagging productivity; Ronald Reagan and his conservative group favor tax benefits to corporations, and to income-tax payers in flat reductions which aid the wealthy most. It is welfare for millionaires. Reagan proposes retrenchment in unspecified federal programs. He promises hopefully to "control federal spending" by cleaning up "waste, extravagance, abuse, and outright fraud" in the wicked city of Washington. The tone is different but it sounds a bit like the words of another outsider in 1976. I hope the debate will continue. It could give meaning to a mediocre election.

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Cover: Art by Jan Drews. Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin at Yalta, February 1945. Photo courtesy Wide World Photos. Article on page 17.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

September 20, 1980

The Empty Hot Seat

President Carter is under no legal or moral obligation to debate his opponents on television. Televised presidential debates are not an established institution; they have happened only twice in the three decades since TV began. Carter supporters are adamant that debates are optional: it is a strictly political calculation for the candidates. Fair enough. But voters are under no legal or moral obligation to refrain from drawing conclusions about Carter's refusal to debate John Anderson on an equal basis. We draw several.

The most obvious conclusion is that Carter thinks he would come out badly in a debate that included John Anderson. Otherwise his strictly political calculation would conclude the other way. We think Carter's right about this. Whatever embarrassment he's suffering now for hiding behind a rose bush is less worrisome than having to share a national podium with an articulate liberal who is not burdened with Carter's four-year record of failure. Cowardice is sound policy when you have much to be cowardly about.

Our second conclusion is that Carter feels no responsibility at all for a fair and open political process if it doesn't help him personally. Of course he's not *obligated* to debate, but clearly a debate among the major candidates would be useful to the voters. In the fog of slick commercials and staged news events, debates would be an opportunity to compare the candidates directly and hear them answer questions on real issues. Quibbles about who is and isn't a major candidate don't change the fact that *any* debate arrangement is a better service to the voters than no debates at all. The League of Women Voters—which Carter has accepted all along as an appropriate arbiter of such matters—decided (correctly, we think) that Anderson is entitled to an equal role in the debates. Now Carter has pouted that if the League of Women Voters won't play by his rules, he will just take his ball and go home.

Finally, we draw—or rather, reconfirm—a conclusion about Carter's high tolerance for dissembling and hypocrisy. You don't find the president himself, or his advisers in their official statements, offering the pragmatic arguments on which their decision obviously was based. Instead, the decision is defended as a service to the electorate. Robert Strauss, Carter's campaign manager, says "it is most important that the American people have an opportunity to see and hear a face-to-face confrontation" between Ronald Reagan and Carter. Strauss conveniently overlooks the fact that neither the League nor Anderson vetoed such a debate, whereas it is Carter's own insistence on a two-person debate *first* that has now denied the American people this "most important . . . opportunity."

Carter himself defends his wish to exclude Anderson from the lead debate on the grounds that Anderson "still is a Republican"; that Anderson and Reagan are "a Republican duo." He thus makes by implication the argument he lacks the courage to make directly to Anderson's face in a debate: that Anderson really is a conservative Republican, more like Reagan than like Carter, and not worthy of liberal votes. Trouble is, Carter's very refusal to debate refutes this proposition. Any Democratic president would be delighted to weaken his principal Republican opponent by forcing him to share the debate spotlight with another candidate of similar views, while the incumbent stood magisterially presidential and alone. On too many issues, Reagan and Carter are the "duo." A debate might make this uncomfortably clear.

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Politics

Still Reagan's to Lose

All the latest national public opinion polls—*Time*, Gallup, Roper, and the *Los Angeles Times*—show the presidential race in a dead heat, representing a spectacular comeback for President Carter. But in terms of the electoral vote, the race is still Ronald Reagan's to lose. *Newsweek*'s state-by-state survey shows Reagan leading in 22 states with 201 of the 270 electoral votes needed to win, with another 11 states (with 119 electoral votes) leaning in his direction. An Associated Press survey puts Reagan ahead in 25 states with 212 electoral votes. Political analyst Alan Baron has Reagan solidly ahead in 20 states with 137 electoral votes and leading in 14 other states with 220 more. Knight-Ridder newspapers showed Reagan with a solid 179 electoral votes and with 64 more leaning his way.

Meanwhile all these survey-takers show President Carter ahead in about 10 states and the District of Columbia for a total of around 100 electoral votes. If you are a Carter optimist, you can say that none of the surveys decisively puts Reagan over 270 and all of them indicate that the big traditional swing states are still swinging—and generally in Carter's direction. If Carter has a base of 97 electoral votes in southern and border states plus DC, Minnesota, and Hawaii, then he can win the election if he carries New York (41), Michigan (21), Pennsylvania (27), Ohio (25), Washington (9), Oregon (6), Maine (4), Illinois (26), Florida (17), and one other state. The point is that Carter has to take them all, however, while Reagan's task is only to deny Carter one or two. Indications are that the race is narrowing in all the key states and there is plenty of time left for Reagan to blow the election. At the moment, however, he remains ahead in enough places to be the favorite.

Two weeks ago, it looked as though Reagan was going to waste no time at all getting himself on the losing track. Reagan apologists have tried to concoct plausible explanations for his gaffes, but they haven't washed politically. Of course Ronald Reagan didn't mean to impugn the south with his crack about the Ku Klux Klan (as Jimmy Carter and a batch of southern Democratic governors alleged), but the fact is that southern Republicans felt offended, too, and Reagan himself was obliged to apologize. It's been argued that Reagan's questioning of Darwinism (like his famous statement that fascism was the real basis of the New Deal) represents learned philosophical insight. But Reagan thus far has failed to demonstrate that his one-liners are drawn from a deep well of erudition. And so far he has done nothing whatever to expand on his views of evolution (or fascism) in order to show he wasn't spouting forth anew on the basis of half-remembered newspaper clippings. But, more seriously, Reagan's insistence on having "official" US relations with Taiwan has managed to complicate relations with China, America's partner in containing the Soviet Union.

Reagan campaign officials claim the candidate's errors have had no impact on their poll results. Reagan himself said the excitement was all a fabrication by the press. But the behavior patterns of the Reagan roadshow changed dramatically last week as the candidate made an ethnics-and-economics sweep through Pennsylvania, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Ohio. Reagan was accompanied by a political chaperone, California professional Stuart Spencer, whose job it was to screen Reagan's prepared remarks for dangerous material. The candidate read what he was handed with hardly a deviation, and he was unavailable for questions afterward. In a two-week period, he delivered two major policy addresses, one on the Middle East and another on economics, but he did not hold one press conference at which the implications of his views might be examined. Reagan's managers did their utmost to insure that the candidate was well rested. Most days, his schedule allowed him to sleep until mid-morning, required him to perform in public only twice or three times during the day (with long periods of down-time in between), and permitted him to retire to his hotel room by suppertime.

The press will complain about this schedule and allege that the candidate is being kept (as the *Washington Post* put it) "under wraps." There may be a renewed flurry of discussion about Reagan's age and some new charges that he's lazy. But politically, the Reagan campaign is employing a smart mistake-avoidance strategy that's appropriate to someone who's leading and doesn't want to falter. When Reagan was making one mistake after another in the opening weeks of the campaign, he seemed to be justifying the portrait that the Carter campaign seeks to paint of him: that of an inexperienced, unpresidential, potentially dangerous lightweight. Carter TV ads are devilishly clever in putting the message across by innuendo. They show the president working in the Oval Office late at night. "When the president makes a decision on an issue," explains the voice-over, "he must know as much about that issue as one person can know. No matter how many advisers or assistants he has, a president can never escape the responsibility of truly understanding an issue himself."

If his new strategy is effective, Reagan should get a political boost from having gotten his economic proposals out on the table in some detail at last—and in more moderate form than had been supposed in Carter campaign portrayals. Far from the massive deficits, inflationary pressures, and cuts in social programs that Carter alleged Reagan's program would entail, the actual proposal unveiled last week promises smaller deficits than Carter's own budget for fiscal 1981, and only two percent less in non-defense spending, which Reagan claims can be achieved by eliminating "waste" and "fraud" instead of canceling existing social pro-

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Correspondence

'Humanize' men

To the editors:

Maggie Scarf's *Unfinished Business* will do a great deal of good. (See excerpt, "Women and Depression," *TNR*, July 5 & 12.) What her essay underscores for me is the considerable damage women's libbers (whose aims I, for the most part, support) have done by discounting and even deriding the qualities of motherhood. I have observed the resulting identity crises in many career women. They have failed to understand that it is the career of every woman to be a woman before everything else. It matters not whether she becomes an actual biological parent. What matters is that she remain true to her biological heritage, which is to function as a warm, loving, humane being—to remain eternally feminine. No one can make a greater contribution to humanity than that.

Women must enjoy full political and social rights, but they must avoid the trap of becoming like men. The role of women in this world should be to humanize men, and this they can do best by being the mothers they ought to be to their children, which should include their husbands, until men have dropped their destructive masculine values and adopted those feminine values which they have for so long pretended to despise: gentleness, compassion, and sensitivity.

Ashley Montagu
Princeton, New Jersey

'People Power'

To the editors:

Whoever was sitting in for TRB during the dog days ("Prattle Power," *TNR*, August 30) reached too hard for a joke—and got it all wrong. *People Power: What Communities Are Doing to Counter Inflation* is not an anti-inflation program. It's only a book—but it's a book that can help people save money.

TRB's guest ghost suggests that consumers should sit on their duffs and take whatever life hands out to them, and that communities can do "nothing" about inflation. Well, a lot of people in this country disagree—and, as *People Power* demonstrates, they are proving, in community after community, that local projects can cut food, energy, housing, and health care costs substantially. The book highlights nearly 100 case studies of community initiatives that are saving consumers millions of dollars.

But perhaps some of your readers would like to judge for themselves. For a free copy of *People Power*, write to: People Power, Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colorado 81009.

Esther Peterson, Director
US Office of Consumer Affairs
Washington, DC

Reds under the bed

To the editors:

I am one of many readers of *The New Republic* who welcomes Ronald Steel's advent as a regular contributor on foreign affairs. But I must state my disappointment with his first effort ("The Absent Danger," *TNR*, August 16).

Writing of a "new foreign policy consensus" he declares: "Suddenly Reds under the bed are fashionable again." He does not approve of this "new consensus," but he chooses to characterize it in terms that cast doubt on his own intellectual integrity, or it may be, his capacity. Think what you will of the Committee on the Present Danger—Paul Nitze, Lane Kirkland, Dean Rusk—they are in no way to be associated with the "Reds under the bed" hysterics of Attorney General Mitchell Palmer and his cohorts of some 60 years past.

Steel does not approve of Norman Podhoretz's book *The Present Danger*. But he goes on to quote Podhoretz as wishing to " 'unleash' the CIA." The allusion, one supposes, is to the right-wing nonsense about "unleashing Chiang Kai-shek" of which we heard a fair amount some three decades ago. And, heaven help us, may hear again! But there is no such passage in Podhoretz's book. Nor would there be from a writer of Podhoretz's standards. He has been misrepresented and defamed. Such defamation has no place in *The New Republic*.

It happens that your lead editorial in the same issue, devoted to the Democratic party, states: "the common person also will be jarred by a party, nominally Democratic, the party that first asserted an American leadership role in the world, now seeking every avenue of retreat from both power and responsibility." One need not agree with *that*. But it is a seriously held view that responsible persons can debate. It happens also to be a view close to that of Norman Podhoretz, and you might say he said it first.

No one can say of your editorial or his book that they are echoes of discredited and marginal aberrations of the past. To the contrary, they represent profoundly serious questions of our future.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan
US Senate
Washington, DC

GNP and taxes

To the editors:

Perhaps Morton Kondracke can clear up my confusion over the statement "Democrats say . . . indexing tax rates might cost so much in revenues that all non-defense spending except Social Security would have to be eliminated" (Politics: "The Dream is Dead," *TNR*, August 23). Shouldn't indexing tax rates limit the growth of real tax receipts to the growth in real GNP? I would think that only if real government spending were to grow faster than real GNP would there be a problem of inadequate revenue. At first glance, tax indexing seems like a way of forcing politicians to pass tax increases rather than letting inflation do it for them. What part of the Democrats' argument have I missed?

David R. Ross
Evanston, Illinois

'Enrichissez-vous'

To the editors:

I cannot recall ever seeing more misinformation packed into a single sentence than that in the fifth sentence of your lead editorial, "Democrats" (*TNR*, August 16): "The Republican nominee seems to have told them just about what the bourgeois monarch, Louis Philippe, told the bankers of Paris at his coronation in 1830: *'enrichissez-vous.'*" Louis Philippe was never crowned. He did not say *"enrichissez-vous."* (Guizot said it.) It was not said in 1830 nor was it directed to Parisian bankers. *TNR*'s readers deserve better history than that.

David H. Pinkney, President
American Historical Association
Washington, DC

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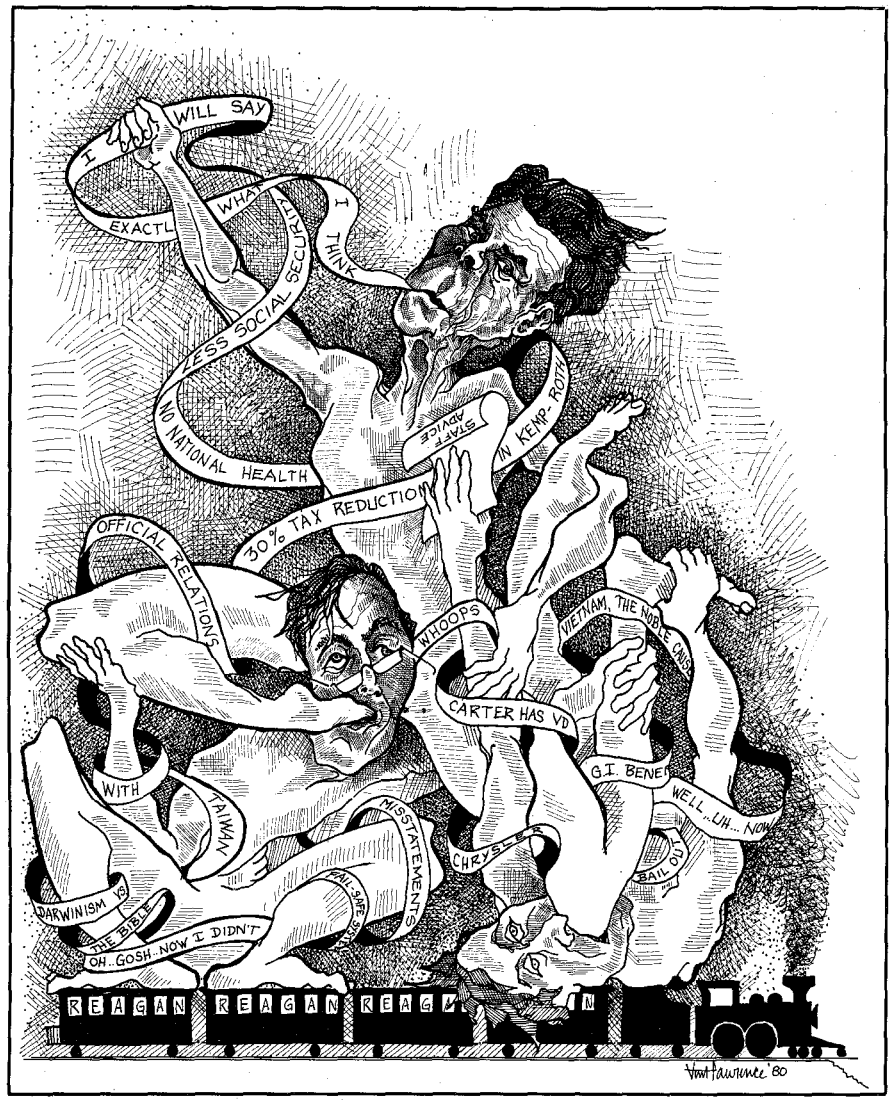

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grams. There certainly are questions left unanswered by the Reagan program—especially the amount of defense increases—but this is not the "radical" proposal that the Democrats have been attacking. The Reagan 10 percent annual tax cut turns out to be merely a reduction in new tax rates scheduled to take effect under laws passed by the Democrats. There will not be an actual cut in existing taxes or federal spending levels, only in projected levels. Rather than a turnaround in the way the federal government does business, Reagan now is offering only a slowdown. Instead of promising a brave new world—and opening himself up to charges of conjuring fantasies—Reagan merely is promising to save the country from Democratic disaster. The new economic statement is another front-runner's damage-limitation device. Carter's economic record is the best issue the Reagan campaign has. Now Reagan has limited the chance the Democrats might have had to turn the focus to "risky Reagan economics."

This is not to say that Reagan still can't stumble and lose. Some Republicans think that Reagan's campaign organization is still a bureaucratic quagmire, overstaffed and lacking clean lines of authority. Too many people have to sign off on every campaign decision, they say, and too many others have direct access to the candidate himself. The only top staff members who have any experience running a national campaign are Spencer and James Baker III, both Ford managers in 1976 who are not part of Reagan's tight, loyalist "inner loop."

Another complaint from the field is that Reagan is spending so much time trying to expand his appeal among traditional Democrats that he is forgetting the first rule of politics: protect your base. On his latest trip, for example, Reagan appealed to the white Catholic vote with a visit to Cardinal Krol in Philadelphia, staged a street walk in a Lithuanian neighborhood, and met with Polish Americans in Chicago and Milwaukee. All that's necessary for capturing the blue-collar vote, but some Republicans complain that Reagan is ignoring voters in Philadelphia's Main Line suburbs and Chicago's North Shore—those who supported Gerald Ford and vote overwhelmingly for moderates such as Pennsylvania governor Richard Thornburgh and Illinois governor James Thompson, but who may be leery of right-winger Reagan.

Even so, latest Republican polls reportedly show Reagan ahead in both Pennsylvania and Illinois. Political reporters making the rounds in Michigan and Ohio report Carter in trouble there, too. And on top of all this, John Anderson's good luck during the past few weeks also works to Reagan's advantage. Carter has decided to stay out of the first League of Women Voters debate, calculating that the damage he'll suffer from outraged editorial writers is less than what he'd endure from building up Anderson as a full-fledged presidential contender. Carter is claiming that Anderson is nothing but a creation of the media, and while there's some truth in that, Anderson's candidacy is even more the creation of Jimmy Carter and his ineptitude in office. Carter's refusal to debate Anderson ought to strengthen a growing impression—established during his nasty campaign against Edward Kennedy—that Carter is not the moral paragon sold to the country in 1976. Republican polls indicate that Carter is increasingly seen as "pious, but devious." His long discourses, during speeches, on peace, patriotism, and his hopes for mankind suggest that doubts about Carter's uprightness are turning up in his own polls, too.

Carter has to hope that Reagan and Anderson somehow will appear less than "presidential" debating without him—either by engaging in a cat fight or by boring everyone. But the chances are more likely—because both of them know that it's in their interest—

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that they'll put on a spirited, principled, issues-oriented performance that will impress the electorate. Carter campaign officials say they could win this election if John Anderson would simply disappear. Another reason to bet on Reagan right now is that Anderson is very much with us.

Morton Kondracke

White House Watch

Messages

When the President's press secretary, Jody Powell, was asked on a TV news program whether he's bothered by evidence in polls that a high proportion of eligible voters are not much interested in any of this year's presidential candidates, he answered: "Well, I think that as the election goes forward and people have a chance to see the nature of the rather stark choice before them, between Governor Reagan and President Carter, that interest will increase. It tends to pick up as we move into October and I think there will be no difference this year."

Apart from the wishful assumption that quickened interest will necessarily quicken support for Carter, Powell had a point. People do come alive and pay more and more attention as the day of choice nears. A few totally unsurprising bobbles by Ronald Reagan in his first fortnight of active campaigning did him immense harm. Carter seemed to do better, but only in transient polls and by comparison with Reagan. It was true for the principal candidates and particularly true for Jimmy Carter, the incumbent President, that everything they said and did constituted messages big and small to an awakening electorate. Here are some of the messages that the President and his administration sent to the electorate in early September. In them there were more minuses than pluses for Carter.

This administration's talent for screwing itself was exemplified in the matter of the President's pathetic brother, Billy Carter. The President and his people had convincingly documented their case that there was nothing worse than folly, nothing criminal or subversive, in Billy's dealings with the government of Libya and in the President's and his administration's dealings with Billy. The members of a special Senate judiciary subcommittee, trapped in a premature commitment to investigate the business, strained to make much out of very little and were close to discrediting only themselves when they were saved from utter absurdity by Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti and three assistants who had been handling the Billy Carter affair.

Assistant Attorney General Philip Heymann and two subordinates testified that Civiletti's delay (justified in my opinion) in passing along some intelligence information about Libya paying off Billy with part of a promised $500,000 "loan" protracted for a short time their effort, successful in the end, to make Billy register as an agent of Libya. They said that Civiletti's caution and the delay did not affect what they considered to be the right outcome. The screw-up, which would have been more serious for Carter if it had received the media notice it deserved and didn't get, lay in the degree of autonomy granted to subordinate Justice Department officials by Carter attorneys general. The first one, Griffin Bell, instituted what Heymann in testimony to the Judiciary subcommittee called "a complete and jealous exclusion of the White House and Congress from any contact with me or a US attorney or any of our attorneys on pending cases. . . ." Bell's successor, Civiletti, continued this "post-Watergate phenomenon." Insofar as it insulates the Justice Department from congressional and presidential pressure, which is its purpose, it's fine. But to a degree that Heymann detailed and won't be detailed here, it also isolates the attorney general and the deputy attorney general from assistant attorneys general and their subordinates. Washington attorney James Rowe, a wise old bird who was one of Franklin Roosevelt's White House assistants, wrote in the *Washington Post*: "Not only does the President not appear to be in control of his attorney general—or even want to be—but his attorney general too often does not appear to be in control of the Department of Justice." Referring to Civiletti's reluctance to mention the Billy Carter problem to the President, and his later lament that he'd been wrong in briefly doing so, Rowe chopped through a lot of current cant when he asked: "Is it really conceivable that the attorney general should not tell his boss, the President of the United States, that a member of the President's family might be indicted if he does not register under the foreign agents' act?"

Part of the intelligence information that Civiletti withheld from his assistants for awhile was that Billy Carter was trying to arrange a deal between the Libyans and a US oil company. Zbigniew Brzezinski, the President's national security adviser, took it upon himself in his busybody way to warn Billy immediately that he might embarrass the President with the project, and the subcommittee prepared to jump all over Brzezinski for disclosing secret information. A worthier subject of interrogation might be Brzezinski's shadowy role in manipulating recent changes in defense and national security policy in ways that politically benefit the President. The sequence of events and unauthorized disclosures, dating back to 1976 and culminating last July and August, that preceded Defense Secretary Harold Brown's public confirmation that a radar-proof "Stealth" bomber is being developed, makes the political motivation too obvious for effective denial. Ronald Reagan is justified in attacking the confirming announcement as a breach of security and propriety. A more blatant breach was Carter's

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signing—not so much the disclosure of the signing as the signing itself—of the presidential directive that purported to authorize a significant change in US nuclear targeting doctrine from mainly non-military to heavily military Soviet objectives. The directive was signed just in time to blunt a demand in the 1980 Republican platform that something like this be done. Carter's new secretary of state, Edmund Muskie, who had complained that the targeting change was made without his knowledge, said September 7 that as a senator he had been coming around to "this kind of flexibility" since 1974. On CBS's "Face the Nation," he also demolished the last ground for pretense that the signing of the directive on July 25 changed anything or authorized anything new. The revised policy, Muskie said, "was in place before I took office as Secretary of State." He took office May 8.

Some of the most interesting Carter messages were fallouts from a manifold effort to obliterate independent candidate John B. Anderson. They were mostly messages of failure and ineffectiveness. The Carter people could do very little openly and directly, and said they did nothing covertly, to keep the Federal Election Commission from certifying Anderson as a viable candidate. The only one of the five commissioners who opposed certifying Anderson as a valid candidate was John McGarry, a protégé of House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill, who joined Carter on September 9 in snarling that Anderson is "largely a creation of the media." The majority accepted a staff opinion that Anderson will be eligible for "post-election public funds as a candidate of a new party . . . if he receives five percent or more of the total popular votes . . . in the 1980 general election." It was a major boost for Anderson. But it was not the simple and unalloyed triumph that he blithely and instantly proclaimed it to be. Despite the passing reference to "a new party" in the basic finding, the FEC expressly refused to rule Anderson's National Unity Campaign the "functional equivalent of a political party," as Anderson counsel Mitchell Rogovin had asked it to do. It also refused to rule that the NUC or any other Anderson organization constitutes a "national committee of a political party," as Rogovin then asked a federal court to rule.

Individual contributions to Anderson and the NUC as it now exists are limited to $1,000. The maximum may rise to $20,000, and NUC may spend up to $4.6 million for Anderson's campaign, if it is declared to be a national committee of a political party. The governing statutory formula indicates that Anderson at a minimum would be eligible for around three million dollars in post-election public funds if he gets five percent of the total popular vote, and for proportionately more if he gets a larger percentage. Anderson announced and it was generally expected that he'd borrow at least the conditional minimum of three million dollars from banks and with the money finance a paid TV campaign. Under cloudy and miserably drafted federal election laws, that is possible but not certain. National banks are forbidden to contribute to presidential candidates. Loans secured only by prospective, though not assured, post-election payments could be construed to be contributions. Individual underwriters of such loans could be construed to be contributing the amounts they guarantee, and thus limited to as little as $1,000 per guarantor. According to its press office, the FEC at this writing has yet to resolve these and similar complexities in understandable and actionable form.

Carter campaign chairman Robert Strauss acknowledges that he and others worked "very, very hard" to persuade the leaders of the New York Liberal party to endorse Carter and not John Anderson. The party's policy committee endorsed Anderson, who with his conservative Republican past is a most improbable Liberal nominee. Strauss, who usually levels with reporters, didn't join the attempt of some others around Carter to minimize the Liberal endorsement of Anderson as a self-serving attempt by New York politicians to reverse the Liberal party's recent decline. "I think it's serious," Strauss said. "It's not a major but it's a significant setback for us because it raises a real possibility that Reagan may carry New York." Strauss knows that New York's 41 electoral votes could determine the national outcome November 4. "I think we can win without the Liberals," Strauss says, "but it will be very tough if that line [on the New York ballot] does well."

Carter and Strauss and their cohorts did their damnedest to keep the League of Women Voters from finding John Anderson qualified to participate in all three of its intended presidential debates. The League's Ruth Hinerfeld delivered a setback to Carter and a boost to Anderson by announcing a finding that he "has clearly demonstrated voter interest and support as indicated by a number of nationwide public opinion polls" and thus is entitled to debate Carter and Reagan in the League encounters. Strauss had told reporters the previous day that Carter absolutely insisted on a first debate with Reagan only and would not enter the League debates if the League or some other sponsor didn't arrange the initial debate the President wanted. This position amounted to giving Reagan the effective say, inasmuch as Reagan has the same right not to debate Carter alone that Carter has to insist on debating Reagan alone before he debates other candidates.

Anderson's first reaction to the League decision was fascinating. Television viewers heard him emit an odd sound of pleasure, half gasp and half giggle, and then say: "I'm very pleased, I'm very happy. I simply cannot believe that the President of the United States would decline the opportunity that he has now been given to debate the issues before the American people. I am confident that he will not disappoint me, that he will be there."

Carter disappointed Anderson and I'm glad he did. If this President had shown the gumption to stick more often than he has to declared positions, he'd be in no

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danger from either Anderson or Reagan. The electorate survived without presidential debates in 1964, 1968, and 1972. Given the chance, they will survive the lack this year.

John Osborne

Confusing capitalists with capitalism.

Chrysler Continued

It is a measure of the news media's passion for image over substance that the only stories resulting from Ronald Reagan's recent trip to Detroit concerned his remarks about the Ku Klux Klan. Almost entirely overlooked was Reagan's about-face on the federal government's bailout of the Chrysler corporation. Last fall Reagan opposed the program, but during a visit with Chrysler chairman Lee Iacocca he called it the "proper answer." It's hard to guess how much this reversal owes to Reagan's irrepressible eagerness to tell each audience what it wants to hear, and how much to his inability—common among Republicans—to distinguish between the interests of capitalism and the interests of capitalists. But his new position makes it impossible to take seriously anything the candidate may say in the next two months about how government interference is sapping the productive capacity of the free enterprise system.

This is all the more true because events since last December, when the loan guarantees for Chrysler were approved, have provided additional evidence that the bailout was a bad idea. The program itself was unreasonably generous, requiring no unpleasant sacrifices by Chrysler, its employees, or its creditors. The company itself was relieved of the need to make the severe economies needed to ward off bankruptcy. The workers, for whose sake supposedly the company was being kept afloat, were spared a pay freeze and granted a three-year wage increase of more than 30 percent. Creditors, who would have been left holding the bag if Chrysler had gone bankrupt, were guaranteed repayment of new loans, which effectively guaranteed repayment of old loans.

Even this generous package, however, has been stretched beyond recognition. The bailout required the banks involved to provide another $400 million in new credit to Chrysler, but they refused to grant the company any additional credit at all. This suggests that the banks strongly doubt Chrysler's chances of survival, even with the federal help. Here they probably underestimate the obstinacy of the Treasury Department, whose Chrysler loan board appears determined to save Chrysler no matter how poor its financial performance. Between April and July, the company's own projections of its 1980 losses rose from $746 million to more than one billion dollars. (When the bailout was being debated in Congress, Chrysler predicted it would lose less than $500 million in 1980.) Chrylser also has reduced its projected 1981 earnings from $330 million to $125 million. Treasury's own accountant, Booz Allen & Hamilton, has made even more pessimistic predictions.

As a result of its steady deterioration, Chrysler now is expected to require the entire $1.5 billion in loan guarantees originally authorized. As recently as April, the company said it would need only $700 million. The loans were supposed to be repaid by 1982, but now the loan board says they won't be repaid until 1986. In July Booz Allen instructed Chrysler to begin restructuring the company by September 1. But Chrysler hasn't even submitted a restructuring plan to the loan board, which hopes to have the plan by October. Senator William Proxmire has warned that Chrysler may have to ask for additional loan guarantees to stay alive.

If it does, there can be hardly any doubt that it will get them. The Chrysler episode so far illustrates plainly the dangers of the federal government intervening to prop up a collapsing company. Once the government has a financial stake in the company's survival, it has hardly any choice but to make whatever concessions are needed to protect its investment. Nor does the company have the usual incentive to reduce costs and promote efficiency. Does anyone seriously think that Chrysler could threaten to close its doors, dismiss a few hundred thousand employees, and leave millions in loans unpaid, and then be faced down by the federal government? Of course not. The government can be expected to provide additional help to avert this catastrophe, even if that means turning Chrysler into a permanent ward of the state. (This is precisely what happened in the case of British Leyland.) Under the terms of the law, the loan board is obliged to bar any further loan guarantees if Chrysler looks like a poor bet for survival. But if it has not done so yet, it isn't likely to do so in the future. And even if the board were to give up on Chrysler, Congress undoubtedly would step in again. Most likely it will be a long time before the government can free itself from this tar baby.

Stephen Chapman

A Fool and His Money

Alienable REITs

The liberal's dilemma when it comes to making money from his money is to choose between bloodsucking exploitation and offering one's fellow human beings a worthwhile service at a reasonable profit. That word reasonable is subject to argument, but for our purposes, it oughtn't to be less than 15 percent return per

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Nick's Picks . . . Bart's Charts

After 11 weeks and two rounds of investments our mythical fund is doing quite well. In rounds one and two most of our money has been invested in three different corporate bonds, where the potential for realizing considerable gains (or losses) is small, but the opportunity to collect 10 to 15 percent interest is great. True to form, these investments have seen only minor fluctuations—Beatrice Foods down, Chrysler Financial up, and Resorts International unchanged—while the interest payments have begun rolling in regularly, Beatrice Foods last month, and $7,313 semiannual interest from Chrysler this month.

But the real story in this hypothetical portfolio has been the remarkable performance of our speculative investment—pork bellies futures. Last month we resisted the temptation to cash in and take our profits when our investment of $96,000 in bellies grew 365 percent to $446,208. Though we couldn't quite repeat that accomplishment this month, our 64 contracts now are worth $569,754 for an increase of 493 percent in 11 weeks. How long can we keep it up? Well, the self-proclaimed "experts" (probably the same ones who, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, have managed to lose millions this summer even as prices have reached new heights) don't think there's going to be an adequate supply of bellies this fall, which should keep the price moving up to meet the demand for bacon. We'll hope the experts are right this time and stay put.

The other good news this month is that as interest rates have started to rise once again, our money fund, which invests in short-term bonds, has responded in kind. The average return to us from Dreyfus Liquid Assets has jumped from eight to 8.75 percent in the past month, and on September 9 it was paying 9.05 percent. The $614,754 we had in this account has earned $5,160 in the last five weeks. Together with the Chrysler interest payment which we deposited, this gives us $627,227 with which to begin round three.

For this month's selections, first we'll return to the scene of our previous successes, the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, to pick up some live cattle futures, and then, for the first time, we'll move into common stock on the New York Stock Exchange—MONY Mortgage Investors. The purchase of live cattle futures will work the same way as our earlier bellies contracts purchase. One cattle contract represents 40,000 pounds (or about 40 head of cattle), and on September 9 the going price for April 1981 contracts was 73.52 cents a pound, so one contract was worth $29,408. But our broker will let us buy it on margin for $1,700, holding the contract as collateral. As with our pork, this allows us to make a lot of money on a minimal investment, but the risk is great. If the contracts decline by an amount equal to 75 percent of our investment—or about three cents a pound—the stock brokerage will sell our contracts to protect its own investment, and we're big losers. At $1,700 apiece, we can buy 58 contracts within our self-imposed $100,000 limit. The broker will charge us $60 a contract at the time we sell. For our other investment this month we'll go with MONY Mortgage, since it's the highest yielding REIT of those mentioned by Nick von Hoffman. It was trading at $8⅞ on September 9, which with an expected dividend of $1.02 will give us 11.5 percent for our money. We can buy 11,250 shares worth $99,844, and the broker will charge us about one percent, or $1,000.

As of September 9, then, our portfolio looks like this:

	August 4	September 9
93 Beatrice Foods Bonds	$ 92,768	$ 86,490
64 pork bellies futures on margin	446,208	569,754
156 Chrysler Financial Corp. bonds	98,865	99,840
140 Resorts International bonds	99,925	99,925
58 live cattle futures on margin	.	98,600
11,250 shares MONY Mortgage		99,844
Dreyfus Liquid Assets	614,754	427,783
TOTAL:	$1,352,520	**$1,482,236**

The score so far (since June 30):

Consumer Price Index (estimated)	+1.65 percent
Dow Jones Industrial Average	+6.9 percent
TNR's Fool Fund	+48.2 percent

Bart Rubenstein

year. Get much below that these days, and you're not an investor, you're an eleemosynary endeavor.

The quest for 15 percent has dispatched dentists and other dubious people into trying real estate. Providing shelter to one's fellow humans is a worthwhile service, but whether or not it's profitable depends very much on how you do it. It the past year or two a lot of amateurs have learned that real estate is something everyone else can make money from.

Typically what they have done is to use their spare cash, or worse, borrowed money, to buy a condominium which they hoped to rent and then sell at a profit later on. A sucker's game. Many who've played it have found out that the rent they can get on their property doesn't cover the mortgage payments, taxes, and condo fees. Now, with the real estate market doing so poorly, they're lucky if they can sell and break even.

There are other ways to make a buck off real estate. Ten years ago one of the most popular was something called the Real Estate Investment Trust. The REITs came on bad times during the Nixon/Ford recession, but the ones that survived are doing much better with the Carter recession and have made such a comeback that people are beginning to invest in them again.

But before you invest in REITs, you'd better understand what they are. That they exist at all is owing to the labyrinthine thickets of the Internal Revenue Code. The code provides that unincorporated business trusts (we'll get to what that means), which are devoted almost exclusively to real estate, don't have to pay federal taxes as long as they give 95 percent of their profits to their shareholders. Thus, share- or stockholders in a successful REIT get higher dividends than the owners of stock in many other kinds of companies. (A "high" dividend or high yield is one that pays back nine or 10 percent of the cost of a share.) In fact REIT dividends can be even higher than they may seem since a portion of some of them can be treated as

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a capital gain, on which you pay a lower tax than on straight income.

But there are some drawbacks to this form of business organization. Since it is not a corporation, its owners, the stockholders, are personally liable for making good on the trust's debts if there's no money in the treasury. Say a REIT owns a hotel, it burns down, and 32 guests are killed in the fire. The REIT's liability insurance is good for only $30 million, but after the relatives sue, the damage judgments come to $52 million. The stockholders are legally responsible for coming up with the rest of the money. Heaven only knows how many REITs there are out there, so if you get interested in buying into one, don't assume they've all been checked out. Make certain yours is properly insured.

But the ordinary business risks are of greater importance than insurance. The advantage of a REIT is that it owns or has made mortgages on a variety of properties. If one goes sour, the high profitability of the others should protect your investment and keep the dividends coming every three months. Risk-spreading, plus what you hope is the management's special knowledge and competence in real estate, are among the REIT's most important advantages compared to going out and buying a single property by yourself or with a few friends.

You have to know something about the property your prospective REIT owns. Take something called the Washington REIT, a stable outfit, which has paid a dividend each year since 1962. It owns good-quality stuff in and around the District of Columbia, but a significant amount of its money is tied up in apartment buildings. Where there are apartment buildings, there is always the threat of rent control, something you really have to worry about where there are a lot of government employees whose attachment to the free market is not to be relied upon at any time, but least of all when it means they get a break in the rent at your expense.

Liberals, who believe in rent control but who would prefer that some other landlord subsidize middle-class tenants, should confine themselves to REITs specializing in commercial and industrial properties. Even here, however, you must take a peek at not only what the trust you're interested in owns, but who is renting it. Take the Hubbard Trust, a solid outfit with money in the bank paying around 10 percent. Buy it when the price is roughly $13 a share and you have a respectable investment, unless Chrysler goes under. The trust has $17.5 million tied up in warehouses leased to Chrysler. Yet disaster sometimes can be a friend. During the last recession, Hubbard was in a similar position to W.T. Grant, the dry goods chain that went bankrupt. As things turned out, the properties were leased to others at a higher rent.

With some real estate trusts, your investment is a gamble on the general state of the economy. Such is the case with Hotel Investors, currently paying a satisfactory dividend of around nine percent. Not a good buy in your fool's opinion, because with the stock selling at $27 or $28 it probably won't go much higher. The reason is that this trust does what its name suggests, invests in hotels. With airline fares doing what they are, the hotel business is not likely to boom in the near future. A lot of companies are taking Ma Bell's advice and calling long distance instead of sending a representative to visit in person.

A REIT with an ideal pattern of investments is the San Francisco Real Estate Trust. They've put their money principally in office buildings and other commercial developments. They're widely scattered so that a regional economic downturn in, say, the upper midwest still will leave them with properties in other places. They do own a couple of apartment houses, but in Kokomo, Indiana, and Omaha, Nebraska, towns with conservative reputations that make the appearance of the dragon, rent control, unlikely.

Unfortunately, others caught on to the attractiveness of the San Francisco REIT before your fool did. The result is that the price of the stock has been bid up to the highest level it has ever sold at. That means the dividend yield is down around four percent, no longer a good buy, although a very good company.

Please don't decide from the foregoing that commercial properties are always better than residential or industrial. During the Nixon/Ford recession they were a disaster. In towns like Los Angeles and New York empty skyscrapers were locked up as the real estate investment trusts that put them up or financed them filed for bankruptcy.

That's why business property is such a good deal now. In the interim, there wasn't that much office space building, so demand has caught up with supply. Ergo, look for a REIT in your community that holds office space and is renting now. The now is important. It takes from three to five years to throw up one of those things and who knows what the market will be like that far down the road? Let somebody else take the risk.

REITs, we repeat, are tricky. Some of them are dominated by a few stockholders who own large chunks of the shares. Often they serve as officers of the REIT, and while doubtless most of them are honorable, upright, and honest gentlemen and gentlewomen, the opportunities for slinky conflict-of-interest deals are large but very hard to pin down. The upshot is easy to define, though: you, the small stockholder, stand to get screwed.

Big isn't always safe with REITs. The biggest real estate trust in the country, the one put together by Chase Manhattan Bank, went bankrupt in the last recession. Still, three you might want to consider are Wells Fargo Mortgage Investors, MONY Mortgage Investors (managed by Mutual Life Insurance), and Lomas & Nettleton Mortgage. Don't buy any if the price of the stock goes up to the point where current

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dividends on it will pay you less than 10 percent. These three all have good track records and appear to be in a position to do well, even in these difficult times for real estate and building, but terrible things can happen to REITs and happen very fast. In some businesses, the decline is slow, so if you're paying attention you have plenty of time to sell out and look for profit elsewhere. With these trusts the downturn can come faster than a dirty weather front. Part of the reason is that some of them are very sensitive to the bounces, up and down, of interest rates. A wrong guess by a trust's management on what rates will be six months or a year ahead can destroy a balance sheet overnight.

Against these risks, you can stack up your dividends in the knowledge that the stock you bought represents a share of ownership in real estate, a form of property that has kept its value well in these inflationary years. Or the other way to make money is to copy the American Stock Exchange. It has gouged a $53 million New York State/federal subsidy for its new building.

For people who like even bigger risks, this is a good time to take your profit in pork bellies. That's the bacon we bet would go up in price a few months ago. Now let's bet on beef. The price is already rising; the herds are shrinking and, thanks to Mother Nature's parsimony with water this summer, feed to fatten the critters will cost more. Let's bet on a stiff leap in price on steers coming to market in January, February, and April. Ask your broker for details on how to place your wager and believe him when he tells you not to do it if you don't feel comfortable about losing about $5,000—a distinct possibility if you listen to a fool.

However, those who took a fool's advice in August about buying worthless bonds from the bankrupt, defunct, and vanished New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad should be happy. For every $100 they invested in August the American Financial Corporation will now pay them $156.38. That's a 50 percent return on a month's investment. Anyhow, if you did cash in, don't you dare thank Paine, Webber.

Nicholas von Hoffman

Nicholas von Hoffman is a syndicated columnist.

The many uses of foreign aid.

Sobhuza's Limos

by James North

Mbabane, Swaziland

This small country, though barely visible in some maps of Africa, merits two entries in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. It has the world's longest reigning monarch: King Sobhuza II, who ascended the throne in 1921. Swaziland also boasts the world's oldest known evidence of mining activity. Primitive men worked the iron ore deposits at Ngwenya some 50,000 years ago.

These two distinctions aside, Swaziland is a fairly typical member of the third world, or, as the poor countries are coming to be known in the never-ending search for euphemism, "the South." As such, it receives a substantial amount of foreign aid: about $77 million this past year, of which $10 million came from the United States. The aid has risen sharply in recent years, reflecting Swaziland's strategic importance in turbulent southern Africa. The amount works out to nearly $150 annually for each of its 520,000 people, a significant figure here where three-quarters of the rural poor, by far the largest single group in the country, have a per capita income of less than $200 a year.

Recently, Willy Brandt's independent commission released *North-South: A Program for Survival*, the report of its two-year inquiry into development issues. Among the commission's numerous recommendations was that Northern nations double their levels of aid to 0.7 percent of their GNPs. At about the same time, the US Congress blocked the administration's aid request. Assistance is being maintained under a continuing resolution at about 0.27 percent of GNP, which is down from 0.53 percent in 1960 (and 2.49 percent during the Marshall Plan). It is one of the lowest levels in the West. What does all this mean halfway across the globe in Swaziland?

As third world countries go, this one is far from being a "basket case." Swaziland is wedged between South Africa and Mozambique, straddling the steep escarpment that connects the inland plateau with the

James North is a pseudonym for an American living in southern Africa.

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coastal plains bordering the Indian Ocean. It has a striking and varied topography: cool, lush mountains, fertile valleys, and hot, flat bush country are only hours apart. Various profitable crops are produced in the three distinct climatic zones, including sugar, wood and wood pulp, and citrus. Swaziland also has valuable asbestos deposits. Foreign capital, mostly British and South African, has flowed in to exploit these resources, causing a sustained economic boom. Real growth has averaged nearly five percent a year over the past decade. Swaziland has a healthy export surplus which is not, as elsewhere in the third world, overly dependent on a single product. The country recently moved a notch upward from "least developed nation" status, and its overall per capita income is among the highest in southern and central Africa.

But the foreign aid community here is not satisfied. Investment is concentrated in the export enclaves, meaning profits for the foreign interests and their handful of Swazi collaborators (who are mostly government officials) and nothing for the rural people who make up some 85 percent of the Swazi population. They remain desperately poor, almost beyond a Westerner's ability to fathom. They typically have one set of ragged clothes, patched many times over, eat the same maize meal concoction day in and day out, live in mud-walled huts, often at a great distance from water supplies of dubious safety, and burn firewood because they can't afford kerosene. Eating meat, even catching a bus to town, are major economic undertakings.

The aid community—aside from the United States, the chief donors are Britain, the United Nations, the World Bank, and West Germany—is in general agreement that a set of problems similar to those prevailing elsewhere in the third world is blocking balanced, equitable development, and quite possibly leading to even worse conditions in the future for the rural majority. The population is growing at an estimated 3.2 percent a year, which is one of the highest rates in the world. Improved general health conditions, particularly a successful campaign to control malaria in the lower regions, caused the death rate to drop (though it remains much higher than in the West). The birth rate, which was high largely to insure the survival of enough children to help with farm work and provide for parents in their old age, has remained nearly constant. Even if it starts to fall soon, the population of Swaziland will still double by the year 2000.

The towns and the small industrial sector simply cannot absorb this population increase. Already, some 7,000 young people are leaving school each year looking for work, but only 4,000 new jobs are being created. Shanty settlements ringing the two major towns already are appearing. Much of their population finds work in what developmentalists call "the informal sector," which in English means as maids, thieves, vegetable hawkers, and the like—all, in an economic sense, unproductive enterprises.

Some way must be found to keep the bulk of the people productively at work on the land, or in small, decentralized rural industries connected with agriculture. In many parts of the third world the major problem is a shortage of land, caused by the existence of huge plantations or *latifundia*. Swaziland has its versions of these—large, mostly white-owned estates which were "purchased" from one of King Sobhuza's predecessors in deals that make the acquisition of Manhattan look like a model of commercial probity. But 63 percent of the land remains under the control of the Swazi Nation, which should be enough for a far-reaching rural development program.

The problem is the semi-feudal tenure system on Swazi Nation land, and the agricultural pattern it has created. Some 200 hereditary chiefs allocate small parcels to their subjects. Tenure is neither secure nor transferable, so there is no incentive for ambitious small farmers to make improvements and try to expand their plots. At the same time, there is no attempt to weld the small parcels into energetic cooperatives or collectives. Agriculture in Swazi Nation land thus stagnates between "capitalism" and "socialism." Production has been dropping, and half the maize consumed here must be imported from Africa. The problem is complicated by the existence of 630,000 cattle, more than one per person, which roam the unfenced, communal grazing lands. The vast herds occasionally cause spectacular traffic accidents. More critically, they overgraze, causing an alarming rate of erosion. To individual Swazi families, their cattle are a sensible hedge against inflation which they maintain at no cost, selling one from time to time to pay school fees or major medical bills. To the nation as whole, the cattle are a monumental problem, and de-stocking must get under way if the country is to retain any topsoil.

The clear need to improve agriculture here coincides nicely with a significant and heartening change in the philosophy of foreign aid which has taken place in the last decade or so. There has been a decided shift away from the previous concern with large status projects from which benefits were supposed to "trickle down" to the mass of people—but never did. The buzz phrase now is "basic human needs." Aid planners "target" their projects directly to the "forgotten 40 [or 60 or 70] percent." The aid community, like any other profession, has its share of cynical careerists. But most developmentalists admit the mistakes of the 1950s and 1960s, and have plunged zealously into the revised task. In Swaziland the centerpiece of their effort is the Rural Development Area program, which covers seven percent of the countryside and is slated to rise eventually to 60 percent. The donors are saturating the RDAs with hybrid seeds, new roads, land use planning, and extension services in a major effort to boost productivity and keep people on the land.

Thus far the RDA program is a disappointment. The rural poor happily have adopted the new technology

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and have used it to produce the same amount with less labor. People freed from farm work have gone to the towns (or as migrants to South Africa) where per capita income is up to seven times as great, and remitted some of their earnings home. The aid planners here chuckle ruefully as they admit the RDA residents have acted with exemplary economic rationality.

The planners agree privately that a wholesale land tenure reform is needed to revitalize rural areas, and that a purely technical solution, like the one they are attempting in the RDAs, cannot succeed on its own. One suggestion is to fence off the communal grazing lands and reduce the herds (after providing an acceptable means of investment and social security to substitute for cattle), then expand the area under cultivation, and change the tenure system drastically. A proposed replacement is a medium-term leasehold, which would provide the security of tenure necessary to free individual initiative, but would not turn the land into a free market commodity which would be gobbled up by large farmers and speculators. Then the individual leaseholders would be encouraged to pool into cooperatives to share tools and work.

Even a government deeply concerned with the rural poor would find this kind of transformation arduous and lengthy. But the Swazi regime is unruffled by the failure of the RDA program, and it has no intention of encouraging necessary changes. Quite simply, its power in the rural areas rests on the chiefs and their right to allocate land. An opposition party formed in the middle 1960s began to make headway in the urban areas and among workers in the export-oriented enclaves, but the king, who rules rather than reigns, and his ministers could rely on continued support from the rural majority as long as the tenure system remained unaltered. An enormously popular pilot project of leaseholders established at Vuvulani in the north promptly became a center of support for the opposition, further alerting the regime to the consequences of large-scale rural change.

So the government is sinking its own funds into huge capital-intensive projects which make the development planners wince. Robert McNamara, the World Bank president, whizzed through here recently, stopping long enough to blast the government for putting several million dollars into a shipping company and a hemorrhaging national airline. The government's latest venture is a new sugar mill, in which it is investing $79 million. To the government's crooked functionaries, the project will provide sensational opportunities to skim off money. But even the honest officials are pleased that the 3,000 jobs to be created mostly will be for cane cutters under their control (unions are illegal), instead of sturdy, independent small leaseholders. The aid planners are growing steadily more exasperated and cynical as government policy continues to contradict their own.

To be fair, there are significant problems with development assistance itself. Most aid is "tied"—donor countries require that funds be used to hire experts and purchase equipment from them. Tying leads to inefficiency: the science faculty at the university here recently wasted several days searching through catalogues for books published in Holland *in English* in order to spend a Dutch grant. It also limits the extent to which a strategy appropriate to the country's development needs can be carried out. US AID purchased heavy earth-moving equipment (from American manufacturers) to build roads in the RDAs instead of hiring labor gangs, for which there would have been no lack of applicants. The introduction of foreign equipment (nearly all donor countries do it) then forces Swaziland to return to the source for technical help and spare parts. For domestic political reasons, AID is understandably happy to say that it spends 90 percent of its Swaziland budget in the United States, but some of that money surely is wasted in terms of local needs.

Another problem is what developmentalists call "limited absorptive capacity." This means that Swaziland does not have the trained people and necessary facilities to put aid to the most efficient use. The government's third five-year plan, for example, began in 1978-79, but various bottlenecks kept the actual document from appearing until this year.

Nonetheless, the major problem here is still the absence of even a minimal government commitment to social justice for the majority. This is not to say that there are no Swazis fighting for a transformation in the rural areas. Various opposition groups—the leading one is headed by an engaging doctor called Ambrose Zwane—have long skirmished with the government on this and other issues. But the king, a deceptively mild-looking old man whose speeches are clever parables about rabbits jumping over rivers, cracked down in 1973. He banned the opposition, closed the Western-style parliament, and promulgated a detention-without-trial law. Some 15 opposition figures have just been released after up to three years in prison: one of them was an independent small farmer who reportedly had the audacity to accept an overseas fellowship without government sanction. Swaziland's human rights violation record is mild by comparison wth some other third world countries, but there is enough repression to keep the regime's opponents frightened and disorganized.

The domestic situation here raises the delicate question of whether aid donors should interfere. The problem has been somewhat reduced in scope with the growth of multilateral assistance: 60 percent of the Swaziland aid package is from the United Nations and other international organizations, which are less likely to demand policies in the narrow interest of a single donor country. Even so, plenty of aid, here and elsewhere, still is given individually, and donors have abused their power in the past. Until assistance is truly multilateral, which would include a degree of genuine

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supervision by both first and third world nations, it is impossible to maintain a general principle that donors have the right to dictate internal policy to recipients.

The Swazi government probably would not listen anyway. Officials say they welcome aid. But the economic boom has been spurred by private foreign investment, and it was under way before aid reached current levels. Assistance may make it easier for the government to invest in its sugar mill, and its new, unnecessary army, which will cost nine million dollars this year and will exist for the obvious sole purpose of repressing possible internal dissent. But it is highly doubtful whether the plump oligarchy here would shift funds from the military to rural development if aid were withdrawn.

Moreover, no rural reform program can possibly succeed without massive participation by the poor themselves, beginning in the first planning stage. The last thing the government wants to see here is peasant activists moving through the rural areas, mobilizing their neighbors, questioning and probing. The regime airily justifies its paternalistic despotism by arguing it is defending "Swazi tradition." But "tradition" does not prevent its officials from riding around in modern, chauffeur-driven limousines, or its subjects from trekking hundreds of miles in search of work they cannot find at home. The rural poor have adapted quite readily to the series of wrenching shocks that economic "progress" has meant for them. Under the right conditions, they would be quite capable of taking some measure of control over the process so that it finally would benefit them.

It is tempting to argue that foreign assistance here is useless, at best a neutral exercise which provides Western experts with high salaries and a chance to see the world, at worst an infusion of cash which helps underwrite a government that snickers at helping the poor. But even though the outlook here is dim, cutting off aid would be worse. Some projects do seem to be working. UNICEF trains people as "Rural Health Visitors," who then keep their neighbors informed about nutrition and similar issues. US AID is helping produce a primary school curriculum which cannot fail to be better suited to Swaziland than the existing one, which is a rigid holdover from the British colonial era.

In a sense, the aid people are modern missionaries. Like their predecessors, they are part of an outside influx which has a dislocating and basically detrimental effect for the majority of people. But though many missionaries arrived with disturbing and patronizing ideas, they also set up schools and health clinics which compensated in part for the harshness of the mines and plantations. Their modern counterparts have a similar modest task. They must soberly go about their work, unpleasantly conscious they will perform no miracles in countries like Swaziland.

Poland foretells the end of the Soviet empire, and the American century.

The Light in the East

by John Lukacs

During the last week in August in 1980 a new kind of light appeared in Poland, illuminating the world scene in an unexpected way. An eerie sentence swam into my mind, the one that Winston Churchill wrote about 1914 when the pall of the parochial Irish crisis hung over the warm summer evening of the British Empire; and then the parishes of Fermanagh and Tyrone faded back into the mists and squalls of Ireland, "and a strange light began immediately, but by perceptible gradations, to fall and grow upon the map of Europe."

That strange light, in 1914, was the glimmering advent of World War I. This strange light, in 1980, reveals the fatal loosening of the Soviet order in the East. Like the advent of the Great War in 1914, this loosening is now well-nigh irreversible. It has been going on for more than a quarter-century, ever since the death of Stalin. Even in Czechoslovakia, even in Bulgaria, the circumstances of life are not what they were 20 or 30 years ago, and the portents of this unbinding, irregular and varied as they are, are far more significant than the existence of the serried rank of Soviet bombs and rockets and the launching of 1,000 ships by a people unaccustomed to the sea.

This loosening has occurred because of two elements. One is the death and the disappearance of

John Lukacs is the author of *The Last European War* and *1945: Year Zero* (Doubleday). His *Patricians and Philistines* will be published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux next spring.

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Marxism everywhere in Eastern Europe, including the minds of the rulers of the Soviet Union. The other is the Russian national character. The Russians, unlike the Germans, are a disorganized people, in whose lives carelessness and rigidity, belief and cynicism exist side by side. Their rulers' communism has nothing messianic in it; it is, simply and brutally, an instrument to extend and maintain their national power. They have done practically nothing to establish their cultural influence in their subjugated satellite neighbors. They allowed trade with the West. As early as 15 years ago the lives of workers in Budapest or in Warsaw had far more in common with the lives of workers in Paris or Madrid than they had had before, and of course far more in common with the latter than with the lives of people in Kiev or Moscow.

Any historian worth his salt ought to know how unpredictable is the history of nations and of their relations. It may be that the dramatic element in the Polish events will fade, at least for a while, that the birth-struggle of the new trade unions will degenerate into dreary squabbles, that the events of August 1980 in Poland will be little more than another painful milestone, like that of 1970 or of 1976. It may be that things will get out of hand, and that the Russians will, after slow and cautious deliberations of their own, throw in their brute force—it has happened before in Polish history and it may happen again. But at least the historian (as any human being, in any human situation) can say, with more than reasonable certainty, not what is going to happen but what is *not* going to happen: Russia cannot digest a nation such as Poland; as a matter of fact she cannot even swallow her. The texture of history has changed and, with it, the structure of events. In the past the Russians dealt with a state. Now they face an entire nation. In the past history was politics, the relationships of the governing classes, underneath the quick-moving, dramatic surface of which the peasants and the workers were largely passive elements. This is no longer so.

If the Russians break into the Polish factory towns with tanks and flamethrowers, blood will flow; there may be a dreadful silence, for weeks, months, perhaps years. Then the real struggle will begin, and the Russians will have a flaring revolution on hand, an unending war of independence.

The Russians know this. This is why, no matter what happens in Poland in the short run, in the long run, in one form or another, the end of the Soviet order (which is not the same thing as the end of the Russian empire) is now conceivable and perceptible—if not yet altogether at hand.

What is also in sight is the end of the world order of the last 35 years, including the coming end of the American century. Finally, slowly, the century is beginning to move again. I write "finally" because this has been a very slow-moving century during the last 35 years.

One—but only one—element in this evolution in Poland is the disappearance of Marxism from the minds of men and women, including the leadership of the Communist party. This death of Marxism (or, rather, the recognition of the death of Marxism) has taken a long time. Marxism was bankrupt as early as 1914, when it was shown that nationality meant infinitely more than class consciousness, when the masses of French and German and British workers went to war with an orderly enthusiasm that threw the pale preachers of international socialism into confusion and dismay.

But when Lenin and his gang won the civil war in Russia, not at all according to Marx but at least in the name of Marxism, many intellectuals preferred to believe that Marxism was the wave of the future and the only rational explanation of the modern world. Again they were wrong. The real revolutionaries who came out of World War I were men such as Mussolini and Hitler. The wave of that time was not communist but the movement which is—still inadequately, following a Marxist phraseology—called fascism.

During the second phase of World War II the prestige of communism revived because Russia emerged as one of the victors of the war. Then all kinds of people—including obsessed anti-communists—believed that the great revolutionary wave of the world was communism. They failed to see that the great Stalin himself had nothing to do with Marx; that he was a crude nationalist; that, unlike the wake of World War I, what followed World War II in Europe was wholly unrevolutionary; that communism was installed in Warsaw, Prague, Budapest, etc., not by revolution but through the presence of the Russian army.

During the last 40 years there have been plenty of Marxist and neo-Marxist intellectuals in the West, filling the floppy pages of their journals and reviews and screeching at each other as if the aviaries of their birdy brains were on fire. In certain countries of Western Europe the disappearance of fascism allowed the Communists to have the monopoly of a (largely verbal) radicalism. Until the recent appearance of groups of terrorists the Communists seemed to represent the only alternative to the existing order (or disorder) of their states. In the end they gave that up too: just look at the advertisements in the French or Italian communist newspapers. They are rotten bourgeois to the core.

The amazing and disheartening condition, however, was this: Marxism was dead, and yet the Soviet Union was more powerful than ever. Consequently many half-baked people, especially in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, decided that they were Marxists. But now the events in Poland have revealed not only that Marxism is dead but that the corpse is dried up. These hard-headed Polish strikers no longer burn with hatred for the symbols of Marx. In 1956 the first thing the Hungarian revolutionaries did was to pull down the statue of Stalin (it was not reerected). In 1980 the

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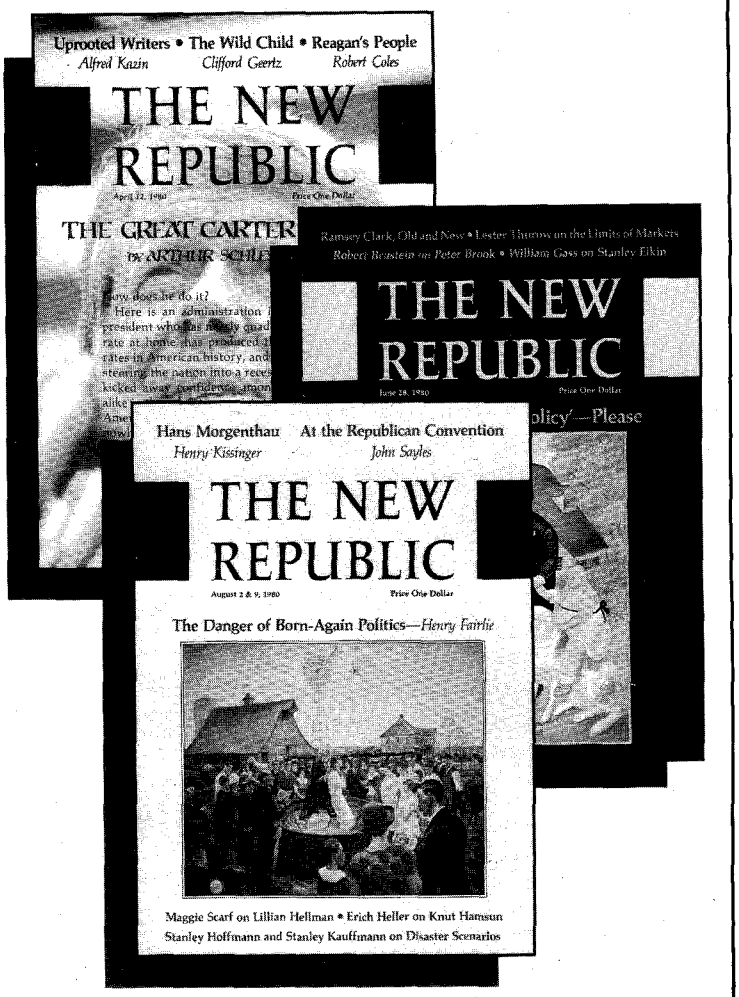
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UN Silence

Historic silences are at least as significant as historic pronouncements, and a good deal more reliable as an index of truth. Official silences around the world during the Polish workers' strike were a faithful guide to the degree of apprehension that established power necessarily felt at seeing its own ritually proclaimed principles taken up in monumental earnest by "the people." Whatever reasons were adduced by Western governments for their failure to endorse the unbloody assertion of citizens' rights at Gdansk, there was also their profound lack of inclination to support a development chilling to every official psyche.

Beyond governmental reluctance, uneasiness was evident in entrenched systems across the board: at one extreme, in the evasions of British trades union leadership, and, at the other, in anxiety expressed by Western banks. (On the latter theme, a revelatory article in the *New York Times* during the strike reported the bankers' view that "Soviet intervention could aid Poland's credit position," since Polish "stability" depends on "the full faith and credit of the Soviet Union.")

Of all silences during the Polish cliffhanger, however, the most deafening was that of the United Nations —nominal custodian of human rights throughout the world. The conditions of freedom of conscience and expression posed—and obtained, at least in theory—by the Gdansk workers precisely correspond to the provisions of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But those who, at whatever risk, espouse the UN's proclaimed articles of faith must expect no word of comfort from the United Nations.

It is unlikely that many persons found the United Nations's silence worthy of mention, even though the strikers at Gdansk had explicitly based their claims on a convention of the International Labour Organization, an agency of the UN system. (After the Polish victory, when tongues became untied, ILO praised the settlement.)

The procedures of United Nations discussion are designed to exclude home truths of the Polish variety which might cause embarrassment to governments; and such items are classified as domestic or internal affairs. (It was to this category of unmentionables that the League of Nations, in the 1930s, relegated Hitler's persecutions of German and Austrian Jews.) One wonders if there is a more sinister phrase than this peculiarly modern exculpation, "an internal affair," uttered by the same blind official mouths that mechanically babble of "the brotherhood of man."

The purposes and principles of the United Nations supposedly are embodied in and maintained by the UN international secretariat—whose members, indeed, are not slow, in their public utterances, to lay claim to a generalized "moral leadership." In a central feature of the Polish drama, the workers' demand for release of political prisoners, this body is particularly exposed, for the UN has its own prisoner at Warsaw.

For over a year, a Polish member of the UN international staff, a young woman named Alicja Wesolowska, has been a political prisoner in a Polish jail. Arrested in August 1979 in Warsaw on her way to a UN assignment in Mongolia, she was held in solitary confinement until last March, when she was tried and convicted of "espionage"—a charge apparently without substance, and in any case not affecting her right to due process. She is now serving her seven years' sentence. Her detention, trial, and conviction all took place in flagrant violation of UN covenants, to which Poland is a signatory, regarding the rights and immunities of international civil servants. Not only did the UN leadership display, in this case, its habitual impotence, but it also has been extremely reluctant to make a public assertion of the principles on which its own survival depends.

Alicja Wesolowska is one of a number of UN employees arbitrarily arrested in recent years while undertaking their international duties. Others are now presumed to have died in prison. Having fruitlessly appealed to its leaders for forthright action on these cases, the UN staff body independently has protested the violations and sought redress for the surviving victims. At the onset of the Polish workers' strike, the UN staff representative telegraphed a renewed appeal to Gierek, urging release of Alicja Wesolowska. At this writing, nothing is known of her fate.

These missing persons are junior employees, on whose behalf the United Nations administration is not prepared to press the governments concerned. Far from endorsing the staff actions to uphold international law, UN leadership has obstructed them at every turn. A recent staff attempt to bring illicit arrests of UN employees before a UN congress at Caracas supposedly concerning itself with the very issue of "abuse of power by offenders beyond the reach of the law" was short-circuited by the UN administration through its legal counsel, Eric Suy. (This same zeal to spare embarrassment to member governments was the cause, some years ago, of withdrawal of UNESCO facilities from an Amnesty International conference on torture.)

UN paradoxes of the kind are innumerable. This summer, Kurt Waldheim sent in a small band of Austrian troops to help break a strike

crowds of Polish workers laughed at the busts of Marx and at the statues of Lenin: they gave about as much thought to the fact that the Gdansk shipyard is named after Lenin as an Irish Catholic janitor in New York would give to the fact that he is assigned to a public school bearing the name of Erasmus or John Dewey.

But this article is not about the failures of Marxism, ludicrous as they are—of almost everything that Marx had predicted the very opposite happened in the century after he died—except to point at the two greatest enormities in his hoary scheme of history. He completely ignored the existence of nations (while he was stupidly preoccupied with the existence of states) at the very time when nationality emerged as the principal factor in history, and he proclaimed the industrial working class as the main agent of the new dispensation of revolution when, in reality, the working classes have been the least revolutionary and the most conservative, the least internationalist and the most nationalist, elements in the world.

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of UN field personnel in the Middle East—a curious use of a UN peace force. (By contrast, his unionized countrymen have sent funds to their embattled Polish comrades.) Iranian women demonstrating in Tehran, at fearful risk, for their elementary rights received no support or even acknowledgment from the United Nations—which proceeded to hold at Copenhagen its "World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women," hopelessly politicized around a ritual condemnation of Israel. As with many such congresses, far more would have been achieved by a meeting unblighted by UN auspices.

The debacle at Copenhagen was hardly over when Waldheim declared himself in favor of Palestinian statehood and the Egyptian director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) canceled a proposed building project rather than award the contract to an Israeli firm submitting the lowest tender. (In a recent article in the London *Times*, a prominent British environmentalist described UNEP as "a worldwide embarrassment" and expressed the hope that "the process of natural selection . . . will inevitably and unregrettably result in the demise of UNEP and in a small reduction in the availability of United Nations sinecures.")

The truth is that there is no such thing as an "international civil service." The early politicization of the UN staff, and the secretary-general's acquiescence in control by governments and national surveillance agents, did away with any possibility of valid internationalism in the secretariat. Insofar as it exists, UN "service" must be rendered in a context of labyrinthine disorder and in gigantic disproportion to the billions annually spent. (As to the civility of senior bureaucrats, we may cite Byron, who found "this spawn of tax-born riches,/Like lap dogs, the least civil sons of bitches.")

Building the Future Order, an anthology of official pronouncements by Kurt Waldheim, has been published recently in deserved obscurity. Together with other UN offerings for public consumption, it provides an opportunity to study the UN posture. This is, as it ever has been, unprofessional, immodest, and insecure: a claim of unearned moral supremacy addressed, in admonitory tone, to an ideally passive public unfitted to form its own impressions.

In his foreword to *Building the Future Order*, Brian Urquhart, a senior UN official for 35 years and a capital source of UN information to the press, accounts for the densely bureaucratic texture of the book's prose by stressing the supreme confidentiality of the secretary-general's dealings with governments, which must "occasionally deprive [his statements] of the element of high drama." Urquhart proclaims Waldheim "an honest broker," and affirms the secretary-general's obligation to speak out on matters of principle, without explaining why this duty is virtually never exercised.

In his preface to another recent Waldheim volume, *The Challenge of Peace*, translated from the original German, Urquhart again tempers our enthusiasm with the declaration that "much of interest must for the time being remained [sic] unsaid." Waldheim is again an "honest broker," and Urquhart concludes that the secretary-general's position is unique in, among other qualities, "its moral acceptance."

In Urquhart's preface to yet another volume, *The United Nations in Bangladesh*—an attempt by Thomas W. Oliver to deal with the UN role in the chaotic birth of Bangladesh, an episode in which UN political, administrative, and logistical confusion and dissension reached a peak—we are bombarded with a torrent of organizational self-praise with a note of hysteria. And in his prefatory remarks to an interview with Kurt Waldheim that appeared last January in the *Washington Post*, Urquhart, yet again acclaiming Waldheim as an "honest broker," tells us that the secretary-general's "doesn't appear to be a very heroic stance very often—and shouldn't be, if you're going to get it right." To Urquhart, Waldheim is "courageous as well as decent."

These essays and observations reflect not only the deep awe of authority and aversion to independent thought that has characterized the UN hierarchy from its start, but the extent to which the United Nations is incapable of any self-appraisal detached from its own pompous fantasies. Above all, they expose the complete absence of any UN sense of public accountability. The public is to accept—in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary—that UN leaders are "doing it right" behind their closed doors. If accounts of UN affairs are uninspired, no conclusion must be drawn from that fact. In expressing any view short of the reverential, the public would be guilty not only of ignorance but of disloyalty to world peace. Self-importance and self-delusion are unbridled, while reason, humility, absurdity, and simple humanity go to the wall.

To attempts by his traduced and unhappy staff to assert their constitutional rights, Kurt Waldheim has issued a warning that "American trade union practices will not work at the United Nations." In that case, perhaps Polish trade union practices should be tried.

Shirley Hazzard

Shirley Hazzard's most recent novel is *The Transit of Venus* (Viking).

This should not have been surprising. Working men and women have no time and no particular inclination to think about revolution. They have, except for the few would-be intellectuals among them, no appetite for it. And thus it was that the working classes in the most industrialized and capitalist societies proved to be the most reliable, the most solid, the least revolutionary elements of their states. This was, by and large, a good thing, but there was a negative element within this condition too. The German workers followed Hitler. The Italian workers followed Mussolini. Masses of American workers favored men such as Joseph McCarthy, and they would demonstrate, on occasion, in favor of General MacArthur and Richard Nixon. The resistance to Hitler and Mussolini began among what remained of the most tradition-bound, indeed reactionary, men and women of the old-fashioned classes. Even in Eastern Europe the revolutionary tendencies in 1956 started from the top, not the bottom:

(continued on page 24)

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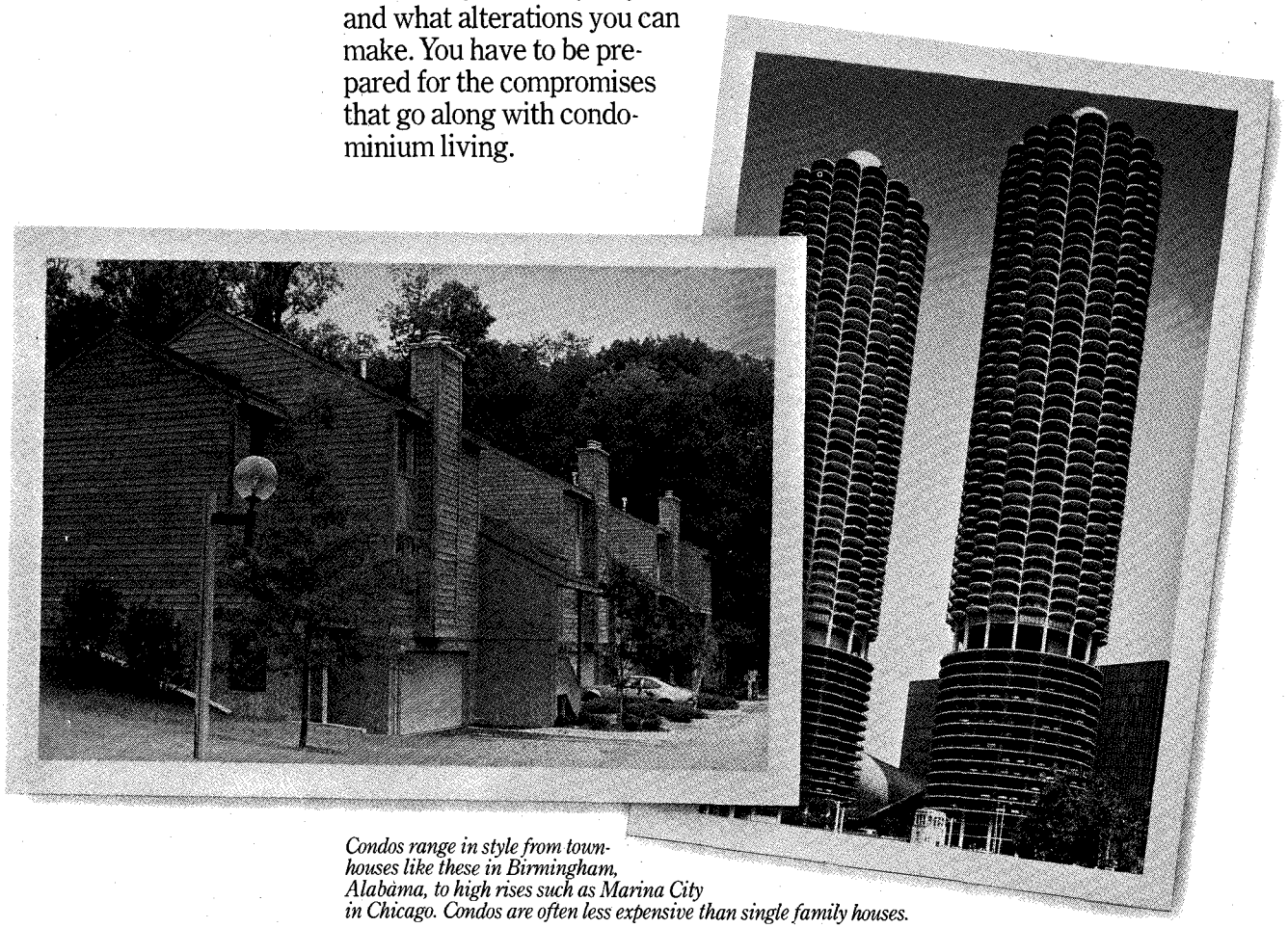
ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Before you buy into a condo, weigh the advantages and disadvantages. Owning a condo unit entitles you to all the tax benefits of homeownership: your mortgage interest payments and property tax can be deducted from your taxable income. And you're relieved of many responsibilities: the condo's management company usually maintains the exterior of the building and grounds.

But remember, condos aren't for everyone. Despite individual ownership of the units, you're only one of many voting members in the condo community. The majority rules on such matters as whether pets are allowed and what alterations you can make. You have to be prepared for the compromises that go along with condominium living.



Condos range in style from townhouses like these in Birmingham, Alabama, to high rises such as Marina City in Chicago. Condos are often less expensive than single family houses.

QUESTIONS WORTH ASKING

Condo ownership can be somewhat more complex than home ownership. So ask a lot of questions about how the condominium is managed, about the builder's reputation, about the quality and condition of the plumbing, electrical and heating systems. Make sure the condo's budget provides an adequate reserve fund for unexpected major expenses (a leaky roof, a bad furnace, etc.).

It is a good idea to have a knowledgeable attorney go over the key legal documents with you. You don't want to be surprised after you've signed on the dotted line.

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from the restlessness of certain intellectuals who for once rejoiced in the fact that their words found a powerful echo among the workers in their suppressed nations.

What has happened in Poland now is different. In 1970 and in 1976 and in 1980 the real movement began among the working classes—acting in accord and in alliance with a strong remnant of honest intellectuals. In 1980 the Polish workers revealed a political wisdom and maturity that often had been wanting in the past, and their leader, the shipyard worker Lech Walesa, has emerged as the most extraordinary European personage since Charles de Gaulle. Their view of the realities of Europe is light-years ahead not only of the Marxists and neo-Marxists in whose deadened orbs the light can no longer penetrate; they are light-years ahead of the new *philosophes* in France who bloviate profitably about the failures of Marxism, 60 years too late—as well as of the American neoconservatives who think that what the United States needs is more nuclear rockets and more military bases, preferably in the Middle East.

And so ideas matter, after all—ideas, not ideology. The end of ideology has come, but not as some of the American neoliberals and neoconservatives have envisaged it. The death of Marxism and of communism is no longer a condition, glimpsed beneath the police bureaucracy of the Soviet Union or beneath the shameless opportunism of the new Chinese rulers. It is a fact, and it is a principal fact in the world order of this day, because the Russians themselves know it. During the 20th century, unlike during the 19th, ideas move slowly but they do move, and finally the recognition of their condition has reached the innards of the monster which may thrash about for a while but which no longer can recover its messianic prestige and its Byzantine power.

At the end of the last world war there remained only two great powers in the world, the United States and the Soviet Union. This was an unnatural situation, for two reasons at least. In spite of the prattle about One World or about Spaceship Earth, this world has proved too large for two superpowers (let alone one) to dominate it—because of many things, foremost among them the nationalism that Marxists as well as American internationalists failed to recognize even though it was before their very noses. Twenty years ago the US and the USSR had enough hydrogen bombs to blow up the world; yet Americans were defeated by Cubans, by Indochinese, even by Iranians, that most corrupt and degenerate of the peoples of the Middle East. The Russians, naturally much less scrupulous than Americans, failed to impose their will on Yugoslavia or on Egypt or even on Afghanistan; they could not digest their Eastern European satellites, and they have had to swallow the jabberings of their communist comrades in Western Europe.

This was the other condition for their weakness: the two superpowers, the US and the USSR, in 1945 represented ideologies that seemed modern, whereas in reality they were woefully antiquated. About the decay of communist internationalism I have said enough. About the degenerated nature of American internationalism I shall only say that it has nothing to do with capitalism (in reality the United States, like all other states during the 20th century, has become a socialist bureaucracy, differing from other states in degree but not in kind) but with the fact that American internationalism was founded on Wilsonian ideas (Franklin Roosevelt as well as Herbert Hoover, John Foster Dulles as well as Dean Rusk, Johnson, Nixon, McGovern, Carter, Anderson, the Rockefellers have been, all, avowed Wilsonians)—ideas that rested on a fundamentally shallow and insubstantial view of human nature and of history.

It was not because of the strength of its ideas, it was because of the living example of this country—a prosperous and powerful and orderly and relatively free society—that the 20th century has been the American century throughout the world, until now. It was not because of the failure of its ideology, it was because of the increasingly obvious evidence of its living example—the misery and brutality of Soviet existence—that the 20th century has not become the Russian century, and that the emulation of Russia, unlike the emulation of America, has had few attractions, indeed, that it has been repellent even to her neighbors.

The power of both the United States and of the Soviet Union is still very great; but their prestige is largely exhausted. Power is, of course, more important than prestige—but only in the short run. In the long run the two elements are inseparable; and a nation (like a person) whose prestige has been badly eroded will not be able to recover once the first serious diminution in its power occurs. This is the principal danger besetting the rulers of the Soviet Union. The extent of this danger is less for the United States whose prestige, no matter on what grounds, athwart the world is still considerable, and which still has considerable forces of recovery—but only if it faces its own problems honestly, if it turns inward, if it dedicates itself to the restoration of decency and order in its national life, shedding the deceptions of its own ideology, which admittedly is not an easy task.

In any event, the greatest dangers besetting the USSR and the US are now internal rather than external. The Soviet Union faces the slow—very slow—erosion of belief in its own governing system among its population, an illness which is chronic, though not yet acute. Even more chronic—though not yet acute—is its problem with its nationalities which now comprise more than half of its population. The Soviet Union is a multinational state; but then, so is the United States, albeit in different ways.

At the end of an age—and we are now living through the end of the modern age, of which the creation of the United States was a singular result—

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the dissolution is such that phenomena of its beginnings appear again, just as in the life of a man some of the phenomena of senility, mental and physical, are reminiscent of his infantile state. On the southern edges of the United States Caribes, Mexico-Indians, and Cubans appear. Within and beyond the enormous borders of the Soviet Union the Mongol, the Tartar, the Moslem presence grows heavier. On the southern edges of Europe, too, the conditions that had begun to wane 400 years ago reappear: the southern shores of the Mediterranean are now solidly Arab, the fingers of Arab rulers reach into Malta, and modern Turkey is reverting to Islam. (This is why the present rulers of Israel—this unique exception, the American-sponsored establishment of a largely Western-type state in the Near East at the time when the Western presence in Asia and Africa was ending—should ponder the history of the Crusader kindoms that disappeared before the end of the Middle Ages.)

The end of the modern age has come. The main problems of the United States are now internal. The Soviet Union, too, will be compelled to turn inward, all of the external evidence to the contrary, their monstrous armament, their hydrocephalic navy notwithstanding. There is something that is not only dangerous, but ludicrous, about these reciprocal armament debates, in this heaping up of rockets and missiles and satellites on both sides. We planted the American flag on the moon; and the erosion of our power and prestige has been precipitous ever since. We cannot impose our power on Cuba, or on the screaming masochists of Iran. What is much worse, we cannot control—indeed, we have not even made up our minds what to do with—the rising invasion of the United States from the South.

So far as Europe goes we must consider the eventual ending of our military presence in the middle of the continent, always apace with the eventual loosening of the so-called Warsaw Pact. The tightening of our resources and the control of our destinies will, sooner or later, require this; and if the price of the increasing independence of Eastern Europe from the Soviet model is the Scandinavianization of the two Germanies, so be it. There is not much we can do about it, at any rate, if that is what the peoples of Europe want for the purposes of their own security.

But this increasing independence of Eastern Europe must be accompanied by our recognition of the security of the Russian state. This is not merely a quid pro quo proposition (though that is the kind of proposition that the Russians have always understood best). It is not in the interest of the United States to witness the breakup of the Soviet Union proper. The breaking up of a great empire has always produced the greatest dangers. Moreover—and contrary to the silly ideas of our liberals and intellectuals—what remains of our civilization is threatened less by violence than by savagery. We should not take too much comfort from the sight of Russians being gunned down by Afghans. The flood of Islam is rising; this, and not the presence of Russians, dominates the scene in the Near and Middle East. It is in our interest—and, in the long run, that of the Russians—to see a Europe re-formed, dependent on its own resources (as we must depend increasingly on our own), which will bring the Russians closer to being Europeans, a revitalization that has now begun in Poland and that, unlike the superficial Americanization of the world, may indeed be the last chance of Western civilization—which is the *only* civilization that we know.

The English novelist Jean Rhys wrote that "a novel has to have shape and life doesn't have any." Perhaps. But history does: it is full of symbols and correspondences. The Russian-American world order began to form 40 years ago, during World War II, which began on September 1, 1939, in Danzig, and in Poland. The beginning of its end may have begun to form in Danzig, which is Gdansk now; and the leader of those events, Walesa, was born in 1944, in that most tragic year in the tragic history of Poland, the country which was a helpless victim of events then, and which may be the forerunner of great historical developments now.

Around 1910 the great French Catholic visionary and poet Péguy wrote: "The true revolutionaries of the twentieth century will be the fathers of Christian families." He meant that the bourgeois state of France and the West was so rotten and corrupt that to be a Christian will take extraordinary courage, it will require standing up against nearly everything in the modern world. How, when the institutions of the West, including even some of the hierarchies and the bureaucracies of the Catholic church, are infested with opportunists in whose minds the flame of conviction has flickered out, Walesa, with his six children, is the "true revolutionary"—as was de Gaulle, the student of Péguy, who in 1940 rose in solitary revolt against the dreadful tide, against the corrupt surrender of France.

During the war Hitler said to his court: "There are three powers in Rome: Mussolini, the king, and the pope, and of the three the pope is the strongest." He was right, even though the pope was not sure of his strength. The present pope, a Pole, may be more confident of it. We do not know. What we know is that now, in Poland, workers born under communism, brought up under communism, have decorated the Lenin factory with pictures of the pope and of the Virgin Mary, and not merely because of their tradition of nationalism (in 1849 the Polish nationalists, in their legion with Garibaldi, fought *against* the pope in Rome). Their demands have included more than the indexing of prices or increments in retirement pay; they have included the broadcasting of the Mass, and religious freedoms. On the floor of the Lenin factory they knelt by the hundreds and the priest came to place the body of Christ in their mouths. A new kind of light, unexpected and strange, has flared up in the East.

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Down Under

In American history there are Indians and blacks. In Australian history, apparently, the social place and function of both those races are filled by one race, the black aborigines. Like our Indians, they were the first inhabitants; like our blacks, they are the largest, needed/hated, cheap labor force. That double aspect is the ground of *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*, an Australian film based on a novel by Thomas Keneally which in turn is based on fact. Jimmie is a half-white black youth, at the turn of the century, who tries very hard to be a "good boy," takes his orders and does his work, suffers his exploitations and insults, and cheerily slogs on, but is at last abused over the edge into murder—mass murder.

The screenplay is by Fred Schepisi (pronounced Skepsee) who directed. Schepisi is 41 and has been working in film for 16 years; *Jimmie Blacksmith* is his second feature, his first to be shown here. Lately there's been a push to put Australian films on the American map, with most of that push wasted on overblown, fundamentally provincial pictures. Many of them are set at the turn of the century: *My Brilliant Career*, easily the best of the previous lot, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *The Getting of Wisdom*, and now *Jimmie Blacksmith*. I can't explain this plumping for period, except that in general the costumes and customs and cinematography were engaging even when the films weren't.

Jimmie Blacksmith charts its terrain in its first two minutes. Somewhere out in the country a minister and his wife wonder where their charge, Jimmie, is. We see Jimmie, then about 13, off with his black relatives and friends, going through a tribal initiation rite that includes scarring of his chest. Later he returns to the minister's house in Western clothes. We soon skip to Jimmie as a young man, setting out in the world with the minister's reference, and we know that we're going to watch the tugs of Jimmie's double heritage.

I note here, as I must, that I didn't understand a good deal of what was said throughout, because of accents, native and white, and vocabulary. I know I didn't miss any important points or links, but surely I missed a lot of nuances. Occasional subtitles would have been a good idea for US audiences, though nothing is muddy in major story or character development.

Step by step Jimmie makes his way unknowingly toward the brink. He is bright, hardworking, and not naive—he expects to be cheated and insulted. He expects to find drink and sex only in black shanties and tents. He expects to be skinned out of pay. But he also expects, when a pregnant white kitchen maid marries him, that he is the father, which he has reason to believe. (The minister's wife had encouraged him to marry a white farm girl. By the time his grandchildren came, she told him soothingly, they would be only one-eighth black.) The baby comes out all white.

He cherishes his wife and her child. Buffets continue until a point when he and family have nothing to eat and the farmer for whom he works denies him credit as a stratagem for driving away Jimmie's black relatives. Jimmie snaps: with an ax in his hand. A black uncle who is with him joins in, not so much out of fury as loyalty. They flee, accompanied by Jimmie's full-black half-brother. Jimmie says he has declared war, though obviously this is after-the-fact rationale of his explosion. More killings follow, until the inevitable happens. All three men are wiped out, Jimmie last.

The story breaks at the moment of the first murders. Before that, tension; after that, nothing but doom. And the second part, at least a third of the film, is a long time to await the foreseen. That last third is just protracted, narrowing flight, with Jimmie's story taking on some political freight, with some moments of poignancy and pain. The end of Jimmie, his jaw torn away by a bullet, captured in a convent, carted off to jail with soldiers protecting him from a mob, then—the night before hanging—talking in his cell with the minister of his boyhood who says he takes the blame on himself—all this is more unwinding than iron grimness, more whimper than bang. It has only a touch of what ought to suffuse it, the sense that death has caught up with a man who has been dead for some time.

But this unwound feeling in the last third is the defect of the picture's virtue: we expect more because so much of what has gone before is so good—well modeled, rich, humane. An American viewer will recognize that Jimmie's experiences are virtual duplicates of what an American black's would have been. (If you imagine an Indian, the irony is fuller.) And, admittedly, part of the

Films Worth Seeing

Airplane! Surprisingly well-sustained spoof of airplane-disaster picture. A lot of gags, mostly raffish and sharp.

Fame. Hot performing—by (alleged) students in New York's High School of Performing Arts. Scrappy script.

The Great Santini. A good film about a father-son tussle is crudded up with interpolations and excesses, but it's still visible.

My Bodyguard. Another good film—about the terrorizing of a high school boy by fellow students—freighted with junk. Here the blotches are cutenesses about his family. But the boy's troubles are recognizably real.

SK

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interest of *Jimmie Blacksmith* is as travelogue: the "same" film about a US black c. 1900 would be less engrossing. Still Schepisi works for intrinsics. The film's texture is woven out of terrible universal incompatibilities.

Ian Baker's cinematography is in the post-1970 ultra-gorgeous vein which tends by now to make me suspicious that vacuity is being varnished. Not here, though some of the compositions, like windings around great trees, are arty. And in many outdoor shots the close plane is focused and the farther planes are unfocused so that the actors seem to be performing in front of a huge misty backdrop. Brian Kavanagh's editing, doubtless done with Schepisi, includes too many inserts of worms and leaves and insects to make us remember the theme of the Natural; and Schepisi himself can lean a bit heavily. Did we need a close-up of the horse manure that Jimmie shovels? Or a close-up of his feet when he breaks spontaneously into an aboriginal dance at the birth of the baby? Bruce Smeaton's music leans even more heavily.

But these flaws, not negligible, are carried in sum by this broad-shouldered, genuine film; and I come now to what really makes *Jimmie Blacksmith* as good as it is. The performances. Every part, without the smallest exception, is well cast and acted. Ray Barrett, a brutal policeman, and Peter Carroll, a schoolteacher whom Jimmie takes as a hostage, do particularly clean-lined work. They are actors. Tommy Lewis, who is Jimmie, Freddy Reynolds, his black half-brother, and Steve Dodds, his black uncle, are not actors, I think, and are wonderful. This speaks to the casting by Schepisi's wife, Rhonda, and of course the innate gifts of these performers. But, for me, the work Schepisi did with his actors, professional or not, is the strongest talent that he shows in this film. I don't expect to forget Reynolds's ease in nature, the wilting of hate in him through natural sunniness; or the stunning moment after the first murders when Dodds sits shivering, or his brief speech in the dock after his sentence. Tommy Lewis, who carries the film, is enchanting, graceful, heartbreaking. His strength and beauty in the first part, his hatred of *everything* after he starts killing, his numbness after his jaw wound, are all like movements in music.

Violence? Yes, *Jimmie Blacksmith* gets to a lot of it, with axes and guns, though no more explicit than necessary. Compare these killings with those in a current violence-peddling film. The razorings in De Palma's *Dressed to Kill* are the reasons for its existence: everything before and after is trumped up with glossy psychologizings, to make the razors possible. Nothing is trumped up in *Jimmie Blacksmith*: the violence is grounded and ordained, and Schepisi is careful not to revel in it. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," says the Gospel. De Palma's treasure is razors; Schepisi's treasure is Jimmie.

John Canaday on art

Report from Saloniki

A few weeks ago, in mid-July, the Greek government junketed about 75 American journalists and museum people to Saloniki for the opening of an exhibition, "Alexander the Great: History and Legend in Art," with attendant festivities inaugurating the new wing of the Thessaloniki Archeological Museum where the show was installed. In revised form under a different title, "The Search for Alexander," the exhibition will open in November at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, before traveling to Chicago, San Francisco, and Boston, where the museums will be free to make their own additions to the Hellenistic material that surrounds the exhibition's core—objects from a stunning archaeological find, a royal Macedonian tomb that had remained unviolated for 2,300 years until its excavation and opening in 1977.

Manolis Andronikos, the archaeologist in charge, adds wishful thinking to inconclusive evidence hoping that the tomb might be that of Philip II of Macedon, Alexander the Great's father, but nobody, not even Mr. Andronikos, is ready to say yes for sure. It is a royal tomb in any case: the larger of the two solid gold caskets found in it bears on the lid an exploding star, symbol of the Macedonian royal family, and contained a man's bones apparently colored by ceremonial wine. (The smaller casket contained the bones of a woman, less royally processed.) Among other spectacular objects found in the tomb, my favorite was a gilded silver *gorytos* (bow-and-arrow case) embossed with scenes from the battle for a city.

The advantage of seeing the Alexander exhibition in Saloniki instead of waiting for it to come to Washington was not a matter of seeing it early or even of seeing it at its best. The Saloniki presentation is rather crowded—the *gorytos*, for instance, sharing a small case with competing objects. With our museums' generous space for installation, plus more sophisticated installation techniques and more money to indulge them, the American versions will be dazzling. And there is no lack in American museums of first-rate Hellenistic material closely enough related to Alexander to round out a beautiful show of the art of a period that has not received much attention in this country.

The advantage was in seeing the Saloniki version in conjunction with Macedonian archaeological sites, including the excavated tomb itself, which stands in a raw pit with the summit of its barrel vault 17 feet below earth level, not simply because the level has risen over the centuries, which it has, but because the Macedonian tombs were built as architectural entities and then covered with great mounds of earth. The tumuli still dot the countryside, and there are other excavated tombs—the one at Lefkadia more interesting, really, than the new discovery at Vergina, except that like most of the tombs it was rifled centuries ago. Lefkadia is on the road to Pella, Alexander's birthplace, a wonderfully evocative spot, somehow, although very little is left standing there, but a few slender columns in the flat, desolate acres. Rudimentary broken remains of walls indicate the ground plans of the palaces and public buildings that made Pella one of the most opulent of Hellenistic cities, and Pella's tiny, enchanting museum is a tribute to the Greek policy of holding archaeological material *in situ* (witness the great small museums in Delphi and Olympia) rather than commandeering the major objects for the National

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Museum in Athens.

The glories of Pella are the pebble mosaics that once ornamented palace floors. A few small ones have been lifted and are exhibited as wall pieces in the museum; others are uncovered but still lying in place with temporary protections against the weather and roped off from tourists' feet. (When I was in Pella about six years ago the mosaics uncovered to that date and still in the fields were unprotected in any way.) The prize of them all, showing a lion hunt, has been shifted to Saloniki, and although not officially a part of the exhibition is in the same gallery. Inevitably, the legend is offered that the two youths battling the lion are Alexander and his friend Krateros; for that matter, they might well be. This is an extremely heavy object, with figures close to life-size and the varicolored pebbles—averaging a quarter of an inch or a bit more in their longest dimensions—embedded in concrete. Sheer size and weight would would make the Lion Hunt difficult and expensive to ship, but it is not fragile and there were whispers in Saloniki that negotiations were under way to include it in the American tour.

The Alexander exhibition is a source of regional pride for Macedonians, who are tired of being thought of, historically, as warriors only. In his address at the opening, Constantine Karamanlis, president of the Republic, emphasized that while Crete, Mycenae, and Cyprus made the outstanding contributions to the earliest phase of Greek culture, and while Athens was the center of the cultural golden age, Macedonia has a rightful claim to a similar role in the post-classical Hellenistic period on the basis of recent discoveries. It is an opportune moment to stake a claim: anyone well past the age of 50 who took an art appreciation course in college may remember that art history in those years still was approached as a succession of rises and declines to and from golden ages in which certain monuments and artists were regarded as apogees toward which all previous developments of the period were preliminary exercises and all that followed were debased offshots. In antiquity we had the Parthenon and Phidias; in the Middle Ages, the cathedral of Amiens (surely, in its placidity and uniformity, the dullest of major medieval monuments); in the Renaissance, the triumvirate of Leonardo, Raphael, and Michelangelo.

A somewhat younger generation found the areas of art appreciation pushed backward chronologically: Greek archaic sculpture, Romanesque sculpture and architecture, and the Italian "primitives" were discovered to be something more than struggles toward the perfection of a golden age to which artists and architects, with amazing prescience, aspired. Now we have pushed in the other direction, beyond those years arbitrarily canonized as the golden ones. It is safe for the first time in nearly five centuries to find Raphael tiresome, and to regard Michelangelo as more baroque (and what a dirty word "baroque" used to be) than golden. Nobody is discarding the Parthenon and the Elgin marbles, but young classical scholars are likely to revere them while finding more excitement in the variety, the wider range of humanistic attitudes, in Hellenistic arts that formerly were thought of as a deterioration (no matter how beautiful) of one unsurpassable moment of balance. Give it a little more time, and all those golden ages may begin to look more like preludes than consummations.

Which would be all to the good.

Detail from the Lion Hunt. Photo by John Canaday.

Cry of the People: United States Involvement in the Rise of Fascism, Torture, and Murder and the Persecution of the Catholic Church in Latin America by Penny Lernoux

(Doubleday; $12.95)

Cry of the People is mainly a catalog of punishments that soldiers and policemen recently have administered to priests and nuns in Latin America for "communism." It includes several horrible stories. For proper effect you should not read it quickly. You should read only a chapter a week, through the fall and into the winter. That way the tales of horror will not bore you. You will discover slowly but unforgettably that "communism" in Latin America does not usually mean membership in a Communist party, but simply interfering with the local torment of the poor. And you will understand better the significance of Pope John Paul's recent trip to Brazil.

The author, an American journalist who has written about Latin America for *Newsweek*, the *Nation*, and the *National Catholic Reporter*, concentrates on cases of the mid-1970s. She justifiably emphasizes the brutal treatment and torture

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of "communist" parish priests and Jesuits in El Salvador, Chile, Argentina, and Brazil. Her principal sources are respectable—the British weekly *Latin American Political Report*, Amnesty International, the North American Congress on Latin America, Maryknoll's *Latinamerica Press*, and the US Catholic Conference's *Latin America Documentation*. Her tone of outraged innocence rings sincere. She rightly distinguishes between the everyday sadism that armed forces and officers of the law in Latin America joyfully exercise on people they suspect of having no protection, and the special agony they dutifully inflict on would-be defenders of the helpless. And she has interesting insights into the uneven development of the technology of torture, from the Honduran army's primitive but inventive use of bread ovens to bake prisoners to the Argentine navy's modern but imported applications of electricity to fry them.

Spliced into the tales of terror is a history of the spread of a Catholic social gospel in Latin America. The history is disjointed, uninformed by the relevant scholarship, and too contemporary—practically without reference, for instance, to the Catholic Action movements active in Latin America since the beginning of the century. And it exaggerates the extent of the newest religious concerns with material welfare. But the author does recount the organization of CELAM (the Council of Latin American Bishops) in 1955, a Brazilian bishop's call for a "Church of the Poor" in 1966, the rise of "the progressives" at CELAM's second conference in Medellin (Colombia) in 1968, the elaboration of a "theology of liberation" in the 1970s, and the resurgence of "the conservatives" at CELAM's third conference in Puebla (Mexico) in 1979.

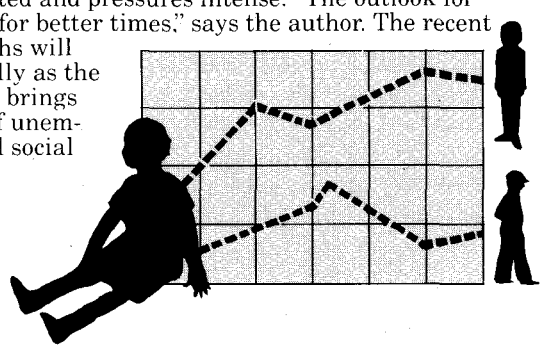
As its subtitle explains, the book also describes the role of the United States in fostering Latin American governments whose soldiers and policemen torture preachers of the social gospel. The author blames Exxon, Gulf, United Fruit, ITT, Grace, Eli Lilly, Wells Fargo, Dow, Kennecott, US Steel, IBM, and others for trying to make as much money as possible in Latin America, even if the conditions of their gain include official baking or frying of the faithful. And she blames the Defense and State departments, the CIA, and AID for serving the companies' interests. She suggests, however, that the direct responsibility of the United States for torture in Latin America is not economic or political but educational.

The most important passage of the book is on the "Doctrine of National Security." It relates the lessons that Latin American officers have learned at our Inter-American Defense College, School of the Americas, Institute for Military Assistance, Border Patrol Academy, and International Police Academy. The guiding principle of this education is evidently vulgar Hobbism. And in this light the courses certainly look useful. The subjects include democracy, interrogation, anatomy, international relations and finance, censorship, PSYOPS (psychological operations), public safety (design, manufacture, and use of incendiary devices), dissent in the United States, "basic electricity," checkpointing, and the staging of rallies and riots. Above all the students have learned who their enemy is—"the Communist," not the Russian kind, whom the United States itself will deter, but "the subversive" in their own countries, whom they have learned to identify by his or her troublesome attempts to stop the torment of the poor. Although the author does not argue the point, the main novelty and importance of the National Security doctrine seem to lie in its egalitarianism. Before, Latin American officers would try to restrain their troops from abusing a "subversive" connected with a rich family, the armed forces, masonry, or the church. Now they try to treat all "subversives" alike, regardless of social affiliations, race, color, or creed. Graduating as professionals in the administration of torture, they return home dedicated to a non-discriminatory campaign against "the enemy within."

The largest bloc of these officers pursue their careers in Brazil. This is the largest Catholic country in the world, and by far the most powerful country in the most Catholic continent in the world. Thanks to our taxes, national security experts manage its Advanced War College ("the Brazilian Sorbonne"), National Police Academy, National Telecommunications Center, and National Institute of Criminology and Identification. Indeed they have managed so expertly that for the last decade their schools have rivaled ours in training South American officers in the theory and practice of equal agony for equal "subversion." Now the ingrates are trying to assert their primacy in South America, lately in Bolivia.

Has the baby boom caused an economic bust?

Stagflation, crime, high divorce rates—today's social and economic problems, economist Richard Easterlin argues, result in large measure from the boom-and-bust cycles in birth rates. Ever since the end of World War II, the relative *size* of an individual's generation has determined that individual's economic fortunes. Thus, the low-birth generation of the 1930's, on reaching working age, enjoyed an uncrowded job market; the post-war baby boom generation, however, finds opportunities limited and pressures intense. "The outlook for the next two decades is for better times," says the author. The recent diminishing rate of births will benefit America generally as the scarcity of young adults brings with it lowering rates of unemployment, inflation, and social distress.



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RICHARD A. EASTERLIN

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The pope's recent visit to Brazil is therefore heavily significant. Against the Doctrine of National Security, John Paul carried out his own educational campaign. He confirmed his admonition that priests and nuns should stay out of party politics. But he publicly sided with nonpartisan "subversives." On July 2 he visited a Rio de Janeiro slum, gave his gold cardinal's ring to the community, and, deliberately recalling the Brazilian bishop's lonely appeal in 1966, approvingly declared that the Brazilian Church "wants to be the church of the poor." On July 3 in São Paulo, the industrial city where the metal workers recently have staged disturbing strikes, he redefined "the enemy within." To 120,000 cheering workers in the city's stadium he declared:

> The persistence of injustice threatens the existence of society from within. This menace from within really exists when the distribution of goods is grounded only in the economic laws of growth and bigger profit, when the results of progress reach only superficially the huge levels of the population, when there persists a big gap between a minority of the rich on the one hand and the majority of those who live in want and misery on the other.

The duty of "those who hold economic and political power" is not "violence." It is "constant action . . . by the route of peaceful reforms" for "a just social order."

The passion behind this book and the pope's declarations deserves admiration. But the author's and the pope's analyses and recommended remedies do not. They derive from four assumptions. First, conscience commands politics, and politics commands economics. "Educated" public debate in the United States over the morality of our policies toward Latin America will turn them definitively from support of governments that torture to support of governments that reform. Second, big foreign and domestic companies in Latin America could do business quite differently from their standard practices, not for "growth and bigger profits," but for "a just social order." They could scatter and diffuse their capital, reduce their rates of return, and contribute to the equalization of incomes. Third, from the conquests 450 years ago until very recently, Latin American history has been the history of a social pyramid in remote isolation. Only in the last 25 years have Latin American societies developed features like the rest of the modern world's. Their deep problems are transitional: to leave "traditional" structures of domination-subordination and evolve "modern" patterns of cooperation. Fourth, the currently powerful groups in Latin America remain traditionally Catholic. Sooner or later they will obey Holy Mother Church. If their predecessors followed her "conservative" teaching, they or their replacements eventually will follow her "progressive" teaching. Consequently, if only implicitly, there is a real chance for the establishment of official or unofficial Catholic social democracy in Latin America.

The assumption about conscience, politics, and economics is a bittersweet illusion. Particularly regarding the United States's policies toward Latin America, it has provided the vocabulary for several "educated" debates in the last 70 years and characterized the propaganda for Wilson's instructions in the Election of Good Men, Roosevelt's Good neighborliness, Eisenhower's Operation Panamerica, Kennedy's Alliance for Progress, and Carter's Defense of Human Rights. (It also has allowed some of our officials in Washington and Latin America to perform private acts of conscience, risking their careers, to help individual Latin Americans escape persecution.) But it has never led a Democratic or a Republican president near a policy to support reforms in Latin America that would limit United States companies' interests there. Nothing in the heavens or firmament now indicates that it ever will.

The second assumption, about the freedom of companies to change their practices, is patently false. A reasonable adult even faintly acquainted with capitalism's rules for business would find it hard to believe. As an American journalist and the pope must know, companies are not simple people but institutions for making money. Not changes of heart but changes in markets oblige them to change their behavior toward rivals, competitors, employees, and consumers; and then they change only to keep making as much money as they can. The day American publishers and the Vatican seek to reduce their rates of return, so will Exxon.

The notion that Latin American societies have not substantially changed until the last 25 years has been a common mistake for the last 425 years. But it is much more than a historical question, for it conveys a gross misconception of contemporary Latin America. Since the conquests 450 years ago, Latin American societies have developed at least as complexly as societies in other continents, in connection with them, and in the same directions. Their deep problems now are not the difficulties of overcoming "tradition" and becoming "modern." They are rather the difficulties of being "modern," which are not exactly new. They are all the difficulties inherent in the modern conflict between capitalist business, which has raged in Latin America for a century, and justice, which has grown as a social demand there for the last 80 years.

The fourth assumption, that the church can reeducate businessmen and politicians in Latin America, is a serious misjudgment. The church lost its major powers in economic and political affairs in Latin America more than a century ago. That is one reason why capitalism has flourished so rapidly and extensively there. "Modern" as the currently powerful businessmen and politicians in Latin America are, they may or may not be religious personally, but no more than our businessmen or politicians do they normally let their merely personal beliefs hinder their fulfillment of their public responsibilities. In the abnormal instances of confusion or error, the fool is sacked, and a soundly "modern" type

WORDS FOR A SONG

Love is a constant
Like the speed of light,
Unbroken spectrum
Of the purest white,
Rainbow unbroken
In the beam of light.

Love is an anguish
That, gathering at the root,
Rises in sap along the rugged branch,
Pulsing in sunlight,
To lose itself in fruit,
To break in fragrance
Above the sunny ground,
Like wine in autumn,
Like insect wings unbound,
Like wings of gauze and rainbow.

Or so I dreamed.
Or so I found.

Janet Lewis

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replaces him. A Brazilian archbishop (quoted in this book) warns landlords in his country that God will kindle his wrath against them as he did against Ahab and Jezebel for their crimes against Naboth. "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." Ahab, who believed Elijah's warning, repented and God said He would put off the evil in his house. But businessmen and their fellows in office in Latin America nowadays, whose grandfathers already proved that God only blusters, do not repent except before the IMF—and do not shrink from little sins for the greater good of their country's accounts and their country's balance of payments. Consequently Latin America offers no real chance for the establishment of a Catholic or any other kind of social democracy.

The significance of the pope's recent declarations therefore is to encourage a new generation of Catholic leaders in Latin America to organize struggles that cannot succeed. At the end of *Cry of the People* the author appends a list of 79 Catholic "martyrs" for the poor in Latin America between 1964 and 1978. With the pope's encouragement, there may be 70 times 79 such "martyrs" in the next 10 years, and still their faith in the future of simple kindness to the helpless will not prevail. But they will not have died in vain. In the holy disorder they will cause, a new generation of the poor in Latin America will learn its own political lessons and with different leaders and new organizations go on to raise some unholy hell.

John Womack Jr.

John Womack Jr. is professor of history at Harvard and author of *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (Knopf).

Loon Lake
by E. L. Doctorow

(Random House; $12.95)

I have here propped before me a letter from the publicity director of Random House who wishes me "Best." We have never met. We have never spoken to each other. The publicity director assumes, I suppose, that something has passed between us—some understanding, some consent. It is a game upon whose rules we are agreed. It is a system of values the publicity director and I uncritically share.

After all, we are in some sense in the same business. She addresses me "Dear Reviewer," although I seldom review books and undertake to do so only beneath the pressure of extremes of admiration or wrath. The occasion of her so-very-personal letter to me is the appearance of E. L. Doctorow's *Loon Lake*.

Now, of course I know better than to judge a book by its publicity director, and before I decided upon the tone I am about to take I was as careful as I could be to be certain that I was not missing some greatness in *Loon Lake*. My complaint is not that this is a bad, awful, commercial, exploitive book. Those books come labeled—we recognize them in an instant. This book is more deeply and subtly exploitive. It appears to concern itself with decades and figures of the past, with the Depression, with working conditions, labor strife, violence, and the very rich who own private railroad cars (private railroad cars are an ongoing figure in Doctorow's writings). It appears by the act of imitation to want to pay respects to writers of the past: Dos Passos comes first to mind. It appears to be seeking a style: at any rate it abandons both punctuation and the formal sentence, as if, like Joyce, James, Faulkner, or Hemingway, Doctorow were seeking new range and flexibility in the language. All these devices suggest a literary intelligence and make me feel that I am in the presence of something serious.

And indeed I am, for this is a failed work of a serious man, a prisoner in Random House. I recognize with compassion that behind the excessive awkwardness of this book lies the author's search for a style to suit a story he wishes to tell. One reason he has been unable to develop it is that he has told it before. This book tells again things Doctorow has told before, but nothing more mature. A writer cannot go forward by clinging wholly to his past.

"Seldom have we received such a barrage of requests for galleys, and here they are at last," writes the publicity director to me. *Loon Lake*, she reminds me,

> resembles its famous predecessor *Ragtime* only in the power of its prose and its author's continuing challenge to the reader's expectations of what fiction can be. Part road novel, part thriller, part *bildungsroman*, it tells the strange and arresting adventures of Joe of Paterson, a young man who sets out to find his fortune during the Depression years in America.

("Joe of Paterson" is a play upon "Leopold of Belgium." It is not at all the hero's name, as the publicity director seems to believe. But then the poor publicity director is baffled in fundamental ways even as she acts out enthusiasm.)

Publishers' sales talk always lets you have your cake and eat it. You mustn't worry that you're getting "only" another *Ragtime*, the mixture as before. On the other hand, if you wish to think so that's fine, too: *Ragtime* "sold over 220,000 copies in hardcover, topped best-seller lists, was translated into some 20 languages, and won the National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction." The publicity director's job is to touch us up. This book—this "dazzling new novel that will become a huge best seller"—must engage us in advance, must have a life before life in view of the improbability of its living long afterward. I have plunged into galleys, neglecting worthier books I had hoped in

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admiration to review—the new Boswell from Yale, new stories of Richard Stern. Book review editors have made space for *Loon Lake* on grounds of its making a noise—the publicity director's job. Decisions have been made for us. The Book-of-the-Month Club has elected *Loon Lake* a "Dual Main Selection," *Playboy* has serialized it, and Random House has boxed it for $35.

The publicity director concludes her letter, "We love *Loon Lake* and we hope you will, too." Who is "we"? Somewhere in all this unanimity must be one, single, lonesome, irritable individual prepared to resist that "we" whose prior opinion has been rallied to intimidate our critical sense.

Saul Bellow wrote some years ago that what we have in America is not a literary situation but a sociological situation. If this book is to be taken up and praised as a mirror of our literary consciousness, we are helpless to ignore the real phenomenon—the triumph of promotion. No doubt all the gang at Random House do in fact "love *Loon Lake*" for the moment. People work up vast enthusiasm for merchandise when it lies dead weight on their shelves. At the first sign of *Loon Lake*'s failing in the marketplace Random House will love some other book.

Mass-market publishing is a venture not in literature but in money, as Doctorow has known. He appears for the moment trapped in the very world he has quite clearly identified in the past. In lines written before *Loon Lake* Professor David Gross of the University of Oklahoma described Doctorow's work:

> In particular, his historical fictions engage two areas of crucial significance: he makes our distortion and repression of awareness of the heart of the matter—what it means to live in a society where money's power is so complete—a central subject in his works, and he establishes the connections among money, excrement and power with savage irony.

This book, as it comes to us, is the work in progress of a writer mining his earlier vein as if it lay yet on the happy side of exhaustion. It was a manuscript in search of synthesis. In the form of a book it remains unfinished, unresolved. At some point somebody in the society of money-power said to Doctorow—if not Doctorow to himself in his agony—"Hey, give us what you've got, we'll publish it anyway."

A loon, I am told, is a bird that dives into the water for fish. "At the center of the novel," according to the publicity director's summary, "is always the symbol of the lake itself: reflecting, distorting, shadowing, highlighting what is happening on its surface and below." Not the lake but "the symbol of the lake"! I'd want a lake to be real before I could view it as symbol, but I understand what has happened here. The publicity director and Random House are undertaking literary study, trying to explain this book to themselves, grasping at its strangeness. (Thus the publicity director could believe there was someone named "Joe of Paterson.")

Loon Lake, in fact, is not more central to this novel than anything else. The word "loon" may apply not only to the birds we occasionally see diving into the rich man's lake, but the people of this book as well, some of whom are "loony," others of whom, in a yet older meaning of the word, are louts, rascals, criminals. The characters on the whole are vague and unrealized. They are sketches, not in the richly suggestive way of fine drawings, but in the incomplete way of a writer halted in his work. In place of characters Doctorow has passed to us entries as they would more or less appear in Who's Who. In the most indolent fashion Doctorow carries the life of Joe Paterson 40 years forward with a two-page Who's Who entry concluding this novel. I cannot believe it. A high school creative writing class would never stand for such a thing.

Nor does Joe make "astounding discoveries about himself," as the publicity director claims. Discovery may lie in the author's apprehension that he has no use for Joe at all. The novel begins on the word "They"—Joe's parents. Joe flees from them. We never encounter them again. However, we soon meet the poet Warren Penfield and *his* parents, who may be Joe and Joe's parents trying out in a new costume. Every writer of experience is familiar with the process of trial and error whereby characters dissolve and become others, but most writers bury their abortions. Warren Penfield is a second try at Joe, and Doctorow must have contemplated the idea of Warren as narrator, since at one point, in 13 pages of truly wretched poetry presumably composed by Warren, Doctorow (or Warren) tells the story of the novel he has tried in several ways to write.

For Doctorow the problem of view-

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point is so formidable that often (I do not mean twice or thrice but *often*) the pronouns shift from first to third person and back again as they do on old abandoned manuscripts.

> I decided to go to California.
>
> Armed only with his unpronounceable last name, he went down to the freight yards to begin his journey. He confuses this now in his mind with the West Side slaughtering plant such atomized extract of organic essence, such a perfumery of disembowelment, that in the fetid blood spumed viscera mist above the yards helplessly flew flights of gulls schools of pigeons moths bats insects plagues all swirling round and round in a great squawking endlessly ejaculative anguish.
>
> I found a door that slid open. . . .

I mean to exhibit here the wavering double-reverse viewpoint, but I also wish to ask the question whether this headlong unpunctuation possibly serves a purpose. Do these lines do anything for meaning or for grace which could not be done better in English? This is disorder. Nor has the book real scenes. Nothing is pursued to its possible implications. Scenes which ought to begin with a problem and approach a resolution, and which ought to exist within the context of unified connections, actually serve only to present me with data, like the Who's Who entries or Penfield's poetry. The author is getting his facts straight. In richer work—in Doctorow some day, I hope—the facts will recede and the drama will triumph: when drama is good we never miss the data. The devices of this book are pointless.

Yet I am no one-cell Philistine seeking time-killing reading. I have a high toleration for styles often seen as obscure. I can read hard books. Is there a system to *Loon Lake*, a figure in the carpet which time will tell, a myth or legend which scholarship will illuminate?

I don't think so, and I needn't pretend so. You can fool some of the people all the time and all of the people some of the time, and you can mightily amuse yourself watching the publicity director of Random House fooling herself in one of the most comical rationalizations I have ever read: "In telling the story, Doctorow has created a series of puzzles, through vignettes that often romantically evoke a particular time and place in American life. The stunning ending resolves the mystery of Joe's life and snaps the earlier sequences into perfect, inevitable order."

Marvelous! It has all snapped into

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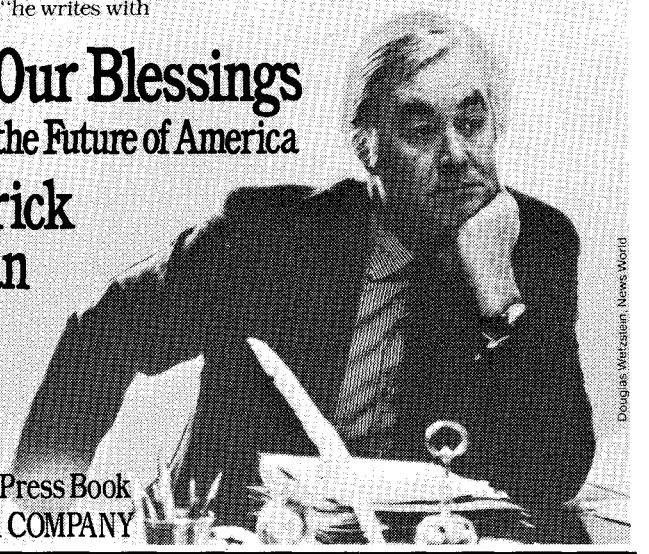

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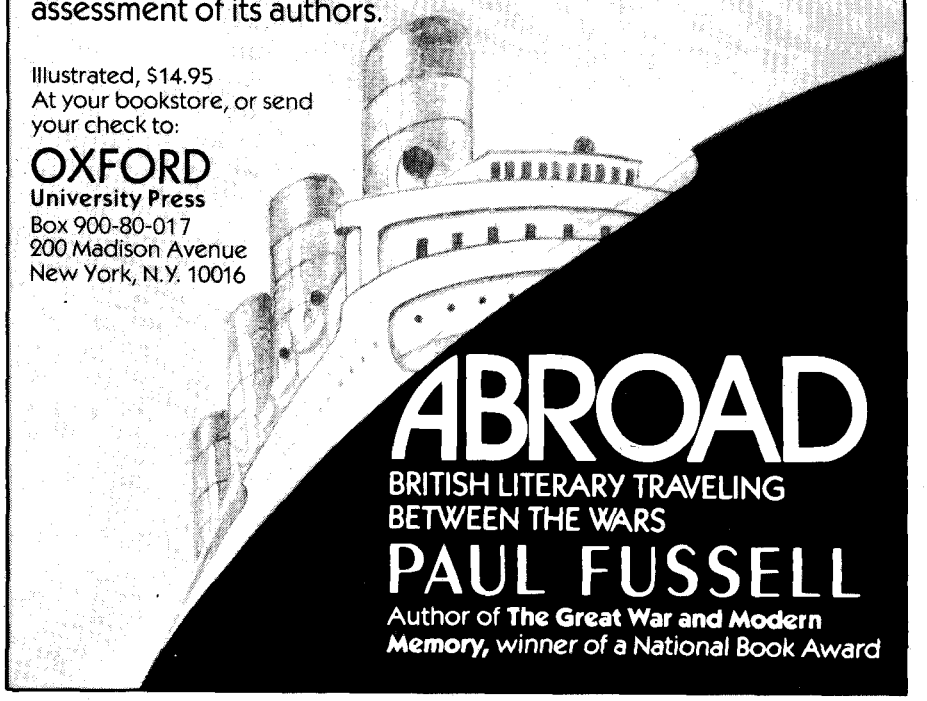

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place for the publicity director.

Academic colleagues over the years have told me that one book or another is "good." Why is it good? Well, they reveal, because it is "teachable." How is it teachable? Well, it gives students plenty of work looking up allusions and interpreting symbols and writing papers describing their findings. I too believe in epiphany. But I do not believe this book will snap open surprisingly to the exertion of our minds, nor do I expect that it will receive the corroboration of time.

Mark Harris

Mark Harris's most recent novel is *It Looked Like For Ever* (McGraw-Hill). He is a visiting professor of English at Arizona State University.

A Russian Looks at America: The Journey of Alexander Borisovitch Lakier in 1857 translated and edited by Arnold Schrier and Joyce Story

(University of Chicago Press; $15.95)

During a visit to the Lenin Library in Moscow in 1970, Professor Arnold Schrier first came across a book written in 1857 and entitled *A Journey Through the North American States, Canada, and Cuba.* On closer inspection it appeared that this was the first comprehensive description of the USA written by a Russian, something akin to a Russian Tocqueville. He then found that two copies of the book were available in American libraries, but "there was no evidence that Lakier's work was known to any American writer or scholar."

At this point, I have to declare an interest, for I grew up in the belief that the author of this book was my great great grand uncle. According to a family tradition for which, not being a professional genealogist, I cannot vouch, Alexander Borisovich Lakier's grandfather had been a physician in Winzenheim, a village near Colmar. Unlike most Jews, he migrated from West to East: having been invited to Russia sometime during the last third of the 18th century, he acquired a certain reputation, settled there, converted, and Russified his name. He lost touch with the rest of the family which, dispersed over several countries, produced a Hungarian economist in the next century who became a member of the British House of Lords, a minor caudillo in Latin America, two diplomats in the German foreign service, as well as the man who first synthetically produced the male hormone. But this belongs to another chapter of family history.

Alexander Borisovich Lakier was 32 when he went to the United States, a landless member of the provincial gentry, and a middle-level official in the Ministry of Justice. He had been born in Taganrog, in South Russia, studied at St. Petersburg University, and married the daughter of the rector, P. A. Pletnev, a well-known poet and critic. He was a man of many parts; when he went to America he already was widely published, but was best known as the author of a history of Russian heraldry which, for many decades, remained a standard work. He was well educated and intellectually curious, but Henry Steele Commager rightly says in his preface that "Lakier was a superb reporter, while Tocqueville was a philosopher." Yet Commager also notes that on occasion the reporter saw further than the philosopher: with something like incredulity Lakier observed the phenomenon of abundance, and he never tired of noticing the

> groaning boards for breakfast, dinner and supper—something beneath Tocqueville's notice, but not beneath the notice of a Russian who knew how servants lived. He saw, too, more clearly than Tocqueville, the significance of the westward movement and of the frontier as a melting pot, a safety valve and a school of democracy. . . .

Lastly, he was more revolted by slavery than Tocqueville, detested it both on moral grounds and as an impediment to economic growth in the south. Not bad for a young Russian provincial who had grown up in the school of absolutism.

Lakier landed at Boston, where he lost his suitcase but eventually retrieved it. He was tremendously impressed by the convenience and effortless efficiency of American hotels ("You can get whatever you request at any hour of the night and it is all done promptly"). From the first moment he was struck by the absence of red tape in American life ("Book-keeping is generally reduced to extreme simplicity"); perhaps it was the result of the fact that the people had been left to themselves, to their own mistakes and virtues, that, guided by its lucky star and its own strength, the country was not afraid to go to the end of the world "and that it will always get what it wants." What was there in the Old World to meet the challenge of this youthful courage?

Lakier went to church in Boston, he studied Harvard College ("I asked a student where the president lived and he pointed to a small house, a cottage, surrounded by a garden. I found the venerable President [James Walker], a man in his declining years, pottering about the flowers") as well as the public school system, the law courts, the prison system. He encountered no destitute people in the streets, and even thought that every Bostonian must be able to read and write. Boston, in short, was wonderful but it was not the real America. A Bostonian was still an Englishman in America.

New York was different. He stayed in the new St. Nicholas Hotel on Broadway, the "most American" and one of the most recent. It gave the appearance of a marble palace, and cost $2.50 a day. He was overwhelmed by the city, which he predicted soon would have more inhabitants than Paris; by Broadway, crowded with magnificently dressed women; by the thousands of carriages and omnibuses, the din of street vendors, auctioneers. He even liked American advertising: "No one better than the American can depict in advertisements the beauty and sweetness of the most ordinary things; to praise them he will find room for poetry and prose. . . ."

When Lakier visited New York, the US was in the middle of one of the recurrent financial panics caused by overspeculation in railroad securities and real estate, but he did not for a moment question the basic financial health of the country. He was more skeptical about the politicians and noted that they were widely distrusted:

> The American people do not like individuals who have devoted themselves to

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> Government affairs and they distrust even the educated person with good intentions as soon as he is reputed to be a politician. . . . . he must be put forward as a man of the people.

He commented on the verbosity of the orators and the inelegant speech making in general: "the hands are used much too freely. . . . It is said that formerly there were more illustrious orators in the Senate." Again and again he comments on American initiative and energy: "But this is the greatness of the American character; it does not give in to the first obstacles, on the contrary, it is irritated by them and gains in strength and energy. . . ." The voluntary firebrigades on which he writes at length were for him a perfect symbol of civic spirit and mutual help: "The duty of everyone to run to a fire is incomprehensible to a European. But, in this lies the difference between American society and ours, that no one can, no one must and no one wants to refuse labour for the common good." Another symbol of America's youthful energy, determination, courage, and the "thirst for making money" was Chicago: he did not know what to make of the fact that city street maps were unavailable until a bookseller explained to him that maps would be out of date within two or three months; new streets, whole new quarters were shooting up all the time.

A naive man devoid of critical sense? Not quite. He commented on the manifestations of charlatanism ("nowhere do the mysterious sciences enjoy such success"). He noted the passion for the dollar; he was exceedingly critical of slavery. At Planter's House, St. Louis's biggest hotel, he saw Negroes serving in the dining room like precision soldiers. Upon a ring by the *maître d'hôtel* they went to the kitchen in measured steps, another ring and they changed the plates ("perfectly unnecessary tricks, added absolutely nothing to the service, I did not believe my eyes"). On a Mississippi steamer he observed black slaves and their white masters; and upon listening to a Kentuckian defending the need for slavery, he wrote: "I wondered whether I was myself talking to a slave." There was much in individual Americans which offended his senses, yet when summarizing his impressions he wrote:

> Why is it that from a distance one looks at these lively, clever, practical people and begins to have a reverential attitude for their boldness, their activity and their realistic view of things? One may not

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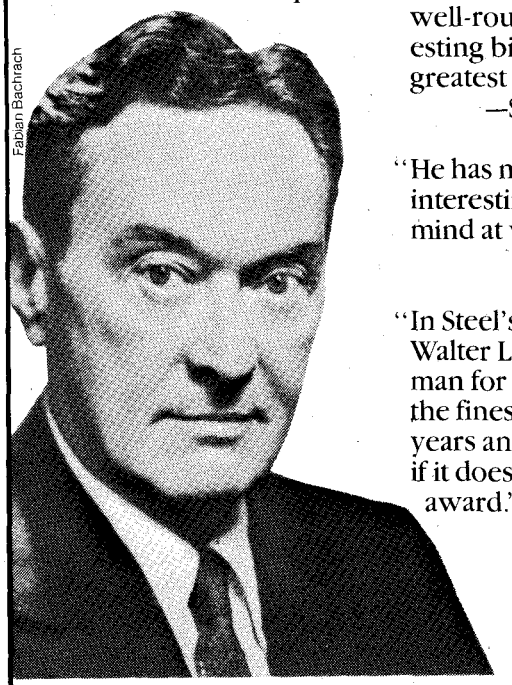
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love certain particulars in America, but one cannot help loving America as a whole, or being amazed at what it is that Europe cannot measure up to—a people who know how to govern themselves and institutions that, unaided, give a person as much happiness and well being as he can accommodate. . . .

Lakier explored America more thoroughly than almost any contemporary: neither West Point nor Saratoga nor Sing Sing was left out of his itinerary. He visited Pittsburgh and Baltimore, Chicago and St. Louis, small southern cities and New Orleans; he met with Indian tribes, and went into a Pennsylvania coal mine; he sailed down the Ohio Valley and the Mississippi River and ended his journey in Washington—"a big village whenever Congress is not in session": "When you see huge white lonely buildings with hundreds of columns standing in various parts of town, you instinctively ask yourself whether all those buildings are standing there in vain. Even the Capital, abandoned at the end of town, towers in deadly silence. . . ." Again, he marveled at the openness of the American political system:

> Without exaggeration I will say that a person can enter the office of the Secretary of War without first encountering a person to announce him. Of guards, there is no trace. I do not know whether this simplicity will last long; it exists at present because every American himself is busy all day with his own affairs and will not disturb the Secretary unless it is necessary, and if an American has business with him, the Secretary cannot turn him away.

He was gratified by the spirit of detente between his country and the US. As the presidential message of 1857 said:

> Our relations with Russia are, as they have always been, most amicable. The present Emperor, like his predecessors, has always shown a kindly disposition towards our country . . . and their friendship has always been highly prized by the government and people of the United States.

As Lakier left the United States on the *Fulton* he pondered the future of the country: there were some clouds on an otherwise bright horizon. Would the Union disintegrate as the result of the excessive mercantile bent of its inhabitants, their immorality, and the decline of a sense of honor? If there was a basis in truth for these dangers, a terrible fate would threaten the United States, but as Lakier saw it, the dark vision was no more than a product of idle imagination. And so he ends on a note of confidence: "As long as the basic principles of the North American system enjoy the confidence they have had up to the present, there can be no danger from either an internal or external enemy."

Lakier died in Taganrog in 1870, aged 45. Nothing is known about the last decade of his life; he apparently wrote nothing after his American travel book.

A charming period piece, evoking fond memories of a world that has gone for ever? Yes, but also a bit more. Wider considerations apart, I owe a personal debt to professors Schrier and Story for the rediscovery of my Russian great great grand uncle.

Walter Laqueur

Walter Laqueur is the director of the Institute for Contemporary History in London.

The Fate of the Dollar
by Martin Mayer

(Times Books; $15)

One of the lasting results of America's physical isolation and economic self-sufficiency—still large, though much diminished—is a general bafflement about international money matters. The dollar rises and falls. The mark, yen, and pound seem to go every which way. "Petrodollars" slosh around the world. It's all very confusing.

Martin Mayer, one of America's most talented and prolific reporters, has brought his considerable background in economic and financial matters to this mess. If anyone can, he ought to be able to make sense of the confusion. His fascination with the institutions and people that handle huge amounts of money extends back to at least 1955 and the publication of *Wall Street: Men and Money*. But his latest investigation, though impressive in its detail, is disappointing in its breadth. In telling how six American administrations have dealt with the international value of the dollar, Mayer fails to explain why anyone should care about the subject at all. Because the whole premise of Mayer's book is that the dollar's international value does matter—and that Americans have behaved foolishly by ignoring it for nearly three decades—the omission is serious. He is not oblivious to the broader implications of his subject; he simply submerges them in too much detail.

Trade and foreign investment still are conducted primarily in dollars, and that's why foreigners worry about the dollar's international value and stability. You have to remember that foreign commerce plays a much larger role in the economies of most other major nations than it does in ours. You also have to remember the old cliché that all politics are ultimately domestic. The state of our political relations with Europe and Japan depend heavily on how our economic policies are viewed as affecting their welfare.

If the dollar's value fluctuates erratically (in relation to other currencies) and cannot be trusted, the whole fabric of global commerce that rests upon it seems jeopardized. The truth of this is less important than the fact that many foreign governments believe it to be true. During the period of the dollar's unquestioned supremacy—roughly from the end of World War II to the mid-1960s—the currency's stability was seen as the essential foundation on which an emerging global prosperity was rising. Now we no longer are viewed as a benign superpower helping to fill the lunch pails of hungry constituents. Rather, short-sighted energy policies and an inflation-prone economy often have made us seem a destructive force.

The fate of the dollar, then, is but a part of the larger story of the decline of American power and authority, but it is a much more significant part than most Americans believe. With characteristic pride, Americans tended to view the dollar's international superiority as a product of natural selection; now we regard its diminished stature as some-

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thing of a national disgrace. But this simplistic view has blinded us to the political implications of what appear to be technical monetary affairs. Consequently, international economic policy too often has been relegated to a secondary position in American foreign policy.

The dollar's special status as international money gave us enormous privileges. Until 1958, most European currencies weren't convertible into one another. A French importer didn't sell francs and buy marks to purchase German imports. Trade was conducted in dollars, and governments settled the surpluses and deficits among themselves in dollars. The dominant anxiety was that the United States wouldn't be able to lend or give away enough dollars to keep the world greased with money. Our trade surpluses reached gigantic proportions, $4.8 billion in 1956 on $17.6 billion of exports. Our payments deficits consisted largely of spending for overseas bases, foreign aid, loans, and foreign business investments.

This suited us just fine. We wanted to maintain a large international presence, and our multinational firms sought new markets by building plants overseas. These were the things we purchased with our trade surpluses and foreign faith in the American economy's stability and superiority. Because we could use dollars to buy what we needed abroad, we didn't have to earn someone else's currency. We were basically free to run our economy as we saw fit, without worrying about payments constraints.

For everyone else, the system brought apparent stability. Under the Bretton Woods agreement of 1944, countries were committed to maintaining fixed exchange rates between currencies. This eliminated the specter of a repetition of the 1930s, when competitive devaluations had thrown a pall over international trade. The United States anchored the system by agreeing to exchange dollars for gold at $35 an ounce. Given the traditional faith in gold—and its relatively fixed supply—this promise was intended to prevent America from pumping out too many dollars.

It didn't. We failed to recognize that our golden dollar deal was neither inevitable nor permanent. Indeed, it had inherent limits. The restoration of our allies' prosperity simultaneously reduced their awe of us and our trade surplus; they needed our high-technology imports less and became more competitive in export markets. Unavoidably, we

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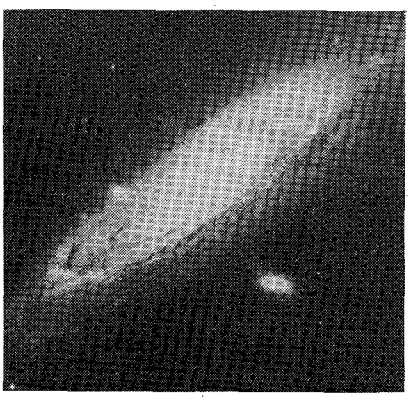

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would have to trim our overseas presence or risk creating conditions that would subvert the money system we had created. The Vietnam War accelerated the day of reckoning by increasing spending abroad and stimulating inflation at home. This raised our appetite for imports and made our exports less competitive. Foreigners were receiving more dollars than they wanted.

The misunderstanding, though, was two-sided. Although the Europeans and Japanese resented our privileges and deplored the decline of the dollar's strength, they feared the consequences of change. To a large extent, the United States was promoting a global inflationary boom. Everyone else wanted the boom without the inflation. Nor were the Europeans and Japanese eager to acknowledge their own increased competitiveness. In 1971, when the dollar finally was devalued, foreigners wanted the devaluation limited. They feared that less expensive US exports would hurt their own exports. Yet a larger American trade balance was critical to a stronger dollar. Even today these contradictions persist.

In short, the postwar international money system could not last, and Mayer expertly chronicles its collapse. I came away from his account full of admiration. He understands the intricacies of foreign exchange markets well, and I, for one, learned much. In addition, he has interviewed dozens of officials here and abroad involved in the making of international monetary policy, and the resulting chronology is probably the best reconstruction of this history so far.

It is one mostly of expedients. All along the way, the United States has sought to maintain both its own political freedom and the dollar's central role. We made the Germans and the Japanese pay more of the costs of our military bases there. We made it more difficult for foreigners to borrow in the United States and more difficult for American companies to invest abroad. In 1968 we stopped selling gold to any foreigner who wanted to exchange dollars for the metal. Government central banks still could exercise that right, but in 1971 President Nixon halted that too.

Although the main contours of this history are interesting, one wonders whether anyone but bankers, international economists, and unschooled economics reporters really want the blow-by-blow story. In the end, the most interesting and significant issues involve the effects of international money arrangements on real economic activity—production and consumption—and, therefore, their political implications. These important matters receive inadequate attention from Mayer.

The fact that the dollar remains the main international currency but is no longer trusted unquestioningly means that we have lost much of our economic freedom. Huge surpluses of oil revenues increase the importance of having a stable currency in which the surpluses can be invested. Without one, producers may decide (as some already have) that their best investment is keeping oil in the ground. That clearly hurts economic growth.

For this and other reasons, our allies continue to fear the consequences of a hysterical flight from the dollar. Today major currencies "float" against each other on foreign exchange markets; that is, if there's more demand for one currency than another, the price of the first rises. But because governments fear large or erratic fluctuations, they intervene by buying and selling currencies. If other countries intervene to prop up the dollar, they buy dollars with their own currencies. In effect, they are flooding their own economies with their domestic currencies. This is what de Gaulle meant when he said that America exported inflation in the 1960s. Being in a position where other countries want neither to intervene heavily nor to accept a huge dollar depreciation, we now face strong international pressures to manage domestic economic policies to maintain the dollar's strength. This is likely to give policies a conservative bias.

There is some good news. So far events have yet to vindicate the fear of opponents of floating exchange rates: that their inherent uncertainty would stifle trade and real economic growth. Trade growth did diminish in the 1970s, but the causes probably lie more in high inflation and skyrocketing oil prices. Traders seem able to accommodate shifting currency values.

But the fears remain. Increasingly interdependent, countries feel that they need more than ever a common form of money to sustain the confidence essential for continuing commerce. The dollar no longer plays that role, and the ambiguous role of the Eurodollar markets compounds the uncertainty. Mayer constantly mentions the Eurodollar market, but does not sufficiently explore the phenomenon. It is, unfortunately, a characteristic flaw.

Robert J. Samuelson

Robert J. Samuelson is a staff correspondent for *National Journal*.

Fanny: Being The True History of the Adventures of Fanny Hackabout-Jones by Erica Jong

(New American Library; $12.95)

Moll Flanders is too wicked, Pamela Andrews too good; and in *Tom Jones* a man has all the fun. Even *Fanny Hill* describes a phallus-centered world, where a man's sexual apparatus is eulogized as "his pride of nature, and its richest masterpiece." Not a single 18th-century novel, laments the picaresque heroine of *Fanny*, has captured woman as she is in nature—a mixture of "Sweets and Bitters," neither obsessed with guarding her virtue nor utterly abandoned to vice.

This "true history," part spoof and part homage to the 18th-century novels Erica Jong loved as a graduate student at Columbia, attempts to fill this lacuna. Jong reconstructs, with care and affection, the settings, diction, and orthography of Augustan England. But her ebullient heroine, Fanny Hackabout-Jones, turns out, in fact, to be a thoroughly modern woman merely tricked out in 18th-century garb. Her quest for identity through both art and motherhood, her discovery that men are the enemy, and her search for a love that will render that discovery obsolete

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place her in a direct line of descent from the heroine of Jong's two previous novels.

Fanny, however, is a better book than either *Fear of Flying*, whose astringent humor deteriorated too soon into resignation, or *How to Save Your Own Life*, whose prescription was to find the right man. Both novels hovered perilously near autobiography; holding a mirror up to nature, Jong saw herself. The format of *Fanny*, most nearly a cross between *Tom Jones* and *Moll Flanders*, with a wink at *Fanny Hill*, helps Jong steer clear of the shoals of solipsism, giving her distance on familiar feminist concerns. The result is a funny, lusty, charmingly didactic work that plunders eclectically from 18th-century sources en route to a gleeful originality.

Fanny combines a briskly elaborate plot and a variegated cast of characters, ranging from the sadistic to the saintly, with a first-person narrative that pauses frequently to indulge in crisp comments on the action. Like Tom Jones, Joseph Andrews, and Moll Flanders, the protagonist is a foundling whose parentage remains one of the novel's chief mysteries. Tracking down her future, she is bound to be overtaken by her past in ways that are often discomfiting. In the meantime, her obsession with her self-realization as a woman seems as contemporary as the litany of sexual variations with which Jong strews her journey.

Not that it is always simple to decide where the 18th century ends and the 20th begins. Take, for example, Fanny's departure from her childhood home in Wiltshire, where Lord and Lady Bellars, her step-parents, have always treated her as one of their own. Lord Bellars has extended his welcome to seducing her, wooing her with protestations of affection which he describes in a mocking letter to his longtime London paramour. When Fanny chances upon the fatal missive, her grief is not so much for virtue betrayed as for love unrequited—at once the most modern and ancient of grievances.

This is Fanny's first encounter with male treachery, but it hardly prepares her—or us—for the violence and depravity which follow in what seems at times to be the worst of all possible worlds. Heading for London in male disguise, Fanny meets up with a coven of witches—not devotees of Satan, but, as 20th-century feminist historians would have it, matriarchal nature-worshippers. No sooner does Fanny come to understand and accept the celebration of femaleness at the root of their mystical consciousness-raising sessions than she witnesses their rape and slaughter by a group of marauding men. Later she is taken prisoner by a Robin Hood-inspired gang of thieves, whose homosexually inclined leader, Lancelot Robinson, resolutely refuses to make love to her—yet another betrayal.

As if all this weren't piquant enough, Fanny stumbles into a London brothel run by the redoubtable Mother Coxtart (Jong makes free with Fielding's penchant for trenchant nomenclature). There Jong has a field day introducing her to virtually every notable of Augustan England. Fanny has been not only their sexual partner, she claims, but their muse, inspiring every artistic creation from Moll Hackabout in William Hogarth's *The Harlot's Progress* to John Cleland's Fanny Hill, whom she avers (with some justice) is but a pale facsimile of the original.

The turning point for Fanny, a would-be writer who is too busy feeling oppressed by life to write, is the birth of her illegitimate daughter Belinda, an event almost botched by a male physician named Dr. Smellie. Belinda is, of course, the namesake of the heroine of Pope's mock epic, *The Rape of the Lock*. (Fanny admires Pope's poetry but is revolted by the man, who has tried unsuccessfully to lure her to his celebrated grotto.)

Fanny's gift for love, hitherto wasted on men, is ignited by her child. When a puritanical wet-nurse steals the baby away, Fanny—ever "Life's Advocate 'gainst the Jaws o' Death"—is willing to brave pirates and perverts to find her. During her quest, after discarding her disguise as a man, she finally sheds the incapacities of her sex, by cropping her hair short, mastering the pirate arts, and making love to another woman. Liberation at last.

In the end, as form dictates, home and hearth beckon. But the new identity Fanny will assume includes a fusion which the immature Isadora of Jong's previous fiction could never accomplish. For Isadora, personal happiness and art were incompatible. Fanny, too, wonders whether art and motherhood, procreation and artistic creation, are mutually exclusive. But in *Fanny*, and through *Fanny*, Jong—who gave birth to a baby while she was writing this book—hints

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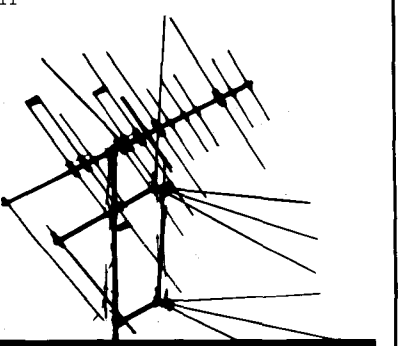

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at a reconciliation of the two.

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Julia M. Klein

Julia M. Klein is a Philadelphia writer.

Brief Review

Pig Earth
by John Berger

(Pantheon; $9.95)

Ever since Marx tossed off the phrase the "idiocy of rural life," Marxism has had trouble granting a dignified place to the tillers who either make revolutions possible (China, Vietnam) or set limits to them (France). Failure of theory has been matched by failure of imagination. Why take seriously the lives of peasants if the mission assigned them is to make the revolution and then get out of the way? For orthodox Marxism as for capitalism, peasants are momentary obstacles on the speedway to the rational future. The upshot has been either neglect or a romanticism in which urban intellectuals turn Marx's slogan on its head, celebrating the happy genius of rural life. The celebration is usually abstract, as in the simplemindedness of Bertolucci's *1900*, with its good guys against bad.

But old pieties about progress are waning. Witness *Pig Earth* by the extraordinarily lucid and wide-ranging British Marxist writer John Berger. Berger has been living and working for several years in a village in Alpine France, and the aim of his lovely, lyrical, haunting books of stories, poems, and brief essays is to recreate the texture of that living peasant world. As the book unfolds, vignettes yield to full-blown revelations of character pushed and pulled by the major forces of our time. The final story, almost half the book's length, is a masterpiece, a gripping tale of the life and death of Lucie Chabrol, black sheep from birth, excluded from the privileges of the peasant world and eventually forced into a trading life that brings about her downfall. This moving evocation of a defiant life shows—but not didactically—how marketplace values exploit the cruelties of peasant life, and its after-death fantasia gives substance to Berger's notion that peasants experience time as cyclic.

Berger writes in direct, deceptively simple declarative sentences; there is a great stillness in his prose. But after a few pages his flat statements start to sing, and go on singing. Berger sews material details into his narratives—as in the cinematography of Buñuel and Bresson—to convey that peasant lives are inseparable from their physical setting, from animals, climate, and housing. But peasant life is far from idyllic. These peasants betray each other. Families are torn by property fights. War, resistance, collaboration tear into their routines. They are bone-weary from work. The state imposes its ordinances. The stories tell of small acts of heroism—and of decline.

In a risky and exciting "historical afterword," Berger tries to generalize from his stories. The essence of peasant life has been survival, its opposition to both capitalist and Marxist ideals of progress. Now peasants' whole social order is being undermined by the international market and state policies. Berger says that Western European planners foresee that in 25 years no more peasants will live there.

At times, overlooking his respect for detail, Berger generalizes excessively about "*the* peasant," a being who presumably is everywhere and at all times the same. But his overall argument is as compelling as it is chilling. Berger's dovetailing of art and essay makes the reader feel just what is at stake in the world that power and capital are tearing up and paving over.

Todd Gitlin

Todd Gitlin teaches sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, and is author, most recently, of *The Whole World is Watching* (University of California Press).

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Washington Diarist

Plots

The irony of seeing John Anderson address a national town meeting sponsored by Mobil at the Kennedy Center last July was almost too delicious. Here was America's foremost liberal conservative (or is it conservative liberal?) railing in the small-town maverick tradition against big bad interest groups—in an auditorium rented by the biggest, baddest interest group of all. ("What did you do after," a Yankee friend joked, "head over to the Department of Energy for apple tarts and Indian pudding?") The proceedings were transmitted to the rest of the global village via National Public Radio. The meeting was called to order by Frank Reynolds, who works over at ABC News on Connecticut Avenue, just two or three miles up from the Kennedy Center (if you get lost, just ask anybody). Anderson's lectern was decorated with a red, white, and blue sketch of a town crier in frock coat and three-cornered hat. The crier was ringing a bell, cupping hand to mouth, and shouting, "Isn't democracy great?" Unfortunately, Anderson's speech lacked the fiery partisanship of a harangue by, say, Sam Adams or William Lloyd Garrison. He droned about his "true coalition of the center." He quoted both Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson approvingly. He said, "No one person—not even the Speaker, or committee chairmen—can speak for the Congress." He said, "Political parties are no longer the aggregating, consensus-forming institutions they once were." He waffled on East Jerusalem. (He said Begin's decision to transfer his office there was the right move at the wrong time.) A few people woke up when he endorsed a moratorium on the building of nuclear plants and when he stated his opposition to the MX, but he lulled them back to sleep with tedious phrases like "nineteen hundred and seventy-six" and "concrete, specific." Harvard biologist George Wald says John Anderson is a Trilateral plot to throw the election to the Republicans. It is more likely that he is an oil company plot to discourage participatory democracy. If town meetings must be this dull, we may have no choice but to leave government to Mobil.

People who used to employ the octopus metaphor to describe the big oil companies now apply it to big government. But what about the long tentacles of little government? An Alabaman I know recently sent a fan letter to the Jack Daniel whiskey distillery in Lynchburg, Tennessee. In return he was sent six glasses labeled "Tennessee Squire." On the back of each glass was a "Tennessee toast." One said, "May you always have red-eye gravy with your ham, hushpuppies with your catfish, and the good sense not to argue with your wife." Another said, "May your sons be brave, your daughters marriageable, your wife loving, and your kinfolk rich." Soon after, the Alabaman was sent a deed for land "situated in the county of Moore, and state of Tennessee . . . near The Hollow, the site still used for charcoal-mellowing Tennessee whiskey drop by drop." The Alabaman guessed his portion to be the size of his thumbnail. With the deed came a letter welcoming him to the society of Tennessee Squires, which includes "prominent people in business, the professions, entertainment, etc. who have enjoyed our product." The following week, the Alabaman received a letter from the Moore County judge. "As you know," the letter read, "Moore County is sparsely settled, thereby necessitating those residents here to serve on juries beyond what would normally be required." Would he be so kind as to record his property at the Moore County courthouse so that he might perform jury duty? The Alabaman awaits his letter from the Moore County tax assessor.

Secrecy is coming back into fashion. The *New York Times* reported on September 7 that the Carter administration has created a new security designation, higher even than the once-forbidding "Top Secret." Tippy Top Secret stuff will now be stamped "Royal." Although the word has unpleasant overtones, it is short and to the point. (Try to fit "Top Secret, And We Really Mean It This Time" on a tiny rubber stamp.) Access to documents stamped "Royal" will be limited to a star chamberish group consisting of two dozen White House aides and 10 members of Congress. Some will say that the new security designation is an attempt to stop press leaks and accidental declassifications such as the one that led to the story in the *Progressive* on the building of nuclear bombs. This is not true. The new "Royal" stamp is just a clever way to get important people to read Top Secret documents. They stopped years ago, when they discovered that everything at the White House was stamped "Top Secret," including many coffee pots and a couple of water coolers. The new designation should restore their thrill of inclusion until inflation necessitates the creation of a new stamp, marked "Divine."

One of my favorite Ronald Reagan quotations has been overlooked by the Democrats and the liberal press. Back in 1973 the governor said, "Being a former farmer and horse raiser, I know what it's like to try to eliminate an injured horse by shooting him. Now you call the veterinarian and the vet gives it a shot and the horse goes to sleep—that's it. I myself have wondered if maybe this isn't part of our problem [with capital punishment], if maybe we should review and see if there aren't even more humane methods now—the simple shot or tranquilizer. I think maybe there should be more study on this to find out, is there a more humane way, can we still improve our humanity?" This proposed method of execution was adopted later in Texas, Oklahoma, Idaho, and New Mexico. The new American Medical Association code of ethics says physicians shouldn't be the ones to give the lethal injections, which leaves veterinarians. I would find this very disturbing if Reagan hadn't assured me that a fatal dose of barbiturates doesn't really hurt.

Why is Time magazine so worried about rising illiteracy? The September 1 issue included yet another article on this subject. The stated matter of concern was bad writing and bad editing. Examples from Gay Talese's *Thy Neighbor's Wife* were cited. *Time*'s real concern, though, is economic. The few people who know the difference between a grammatical sentence and an ungrammatical one will have to be paid more. Grubby writers and editors will be seen in expensive French restaurants. Their demands will multiply as their tastes improve. This already has begun to happen at Time-Life Books in Alexandria, Virginia. My summer roommate, who was an intern there, developed a liking for tournedos with bearnaise sauce and Grand Marnier mousse. His Friday work day ended at noon, presumably so that he might arrive at his hunting lodge by sundown. Needless to say, he enjoyed Washington.

T. N.

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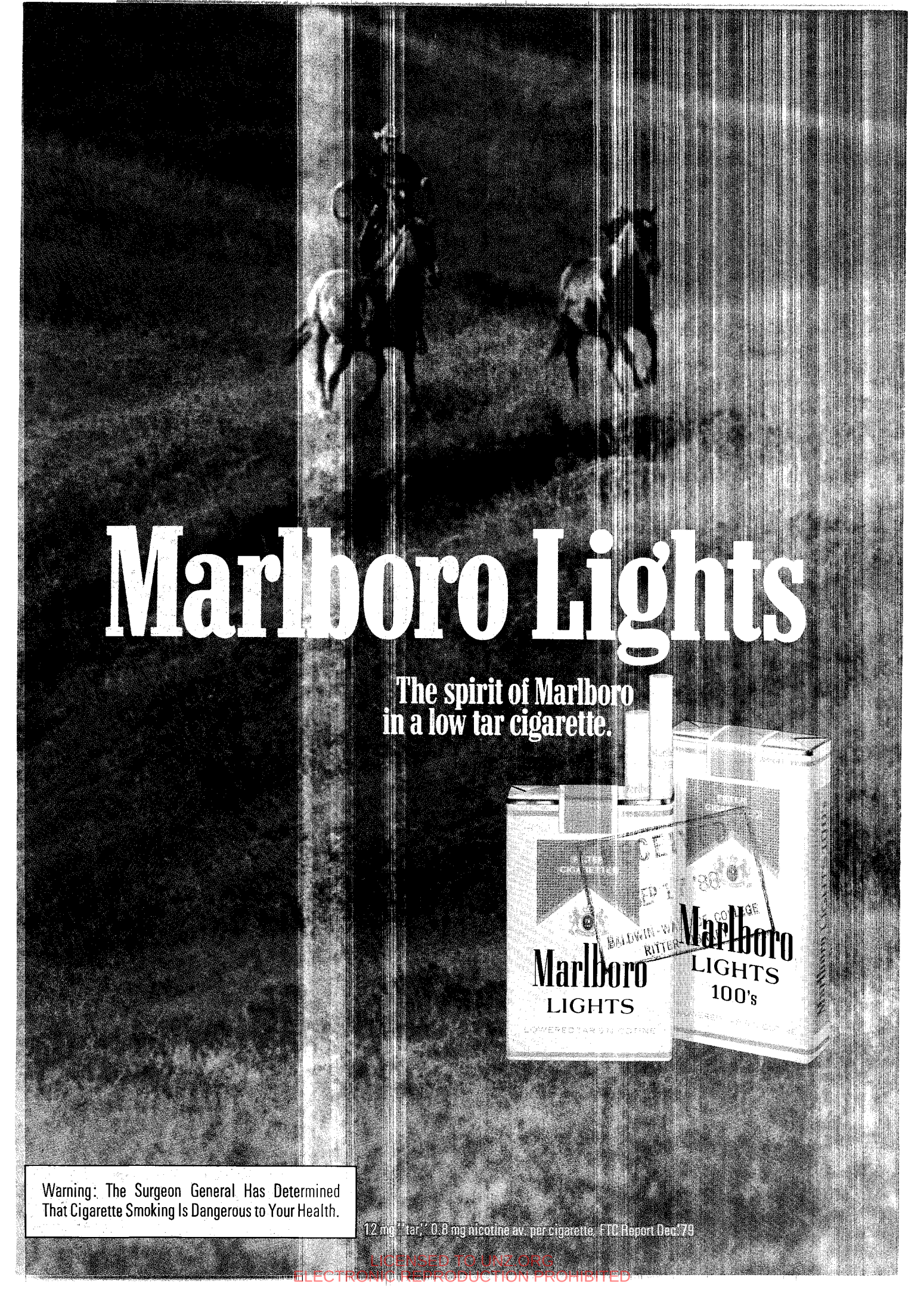
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